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MY GERMAN YEAR

BY

I. A. R. WYLIE

AUTHOR OF "THE RAJAH'S PEOPLE"

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WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS

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MY GERMAN YEAR

CHAPTER I

THE REASON OF IT—INTRODUCTORY

IN these nervous days, when peaceful British householders retire to bed with the black possibility before them of waking up to find themselves overwhelmed by German airships, German Dreadnoughts, German soldiers, and—worst of all—German policemen, in other words, to find that their dear Motherland has been transformed into a German colony, there is "of making many books no end" on the subject of our future conquerors and oppressors. The authors are sometimes intensely serious—as becomes the situation. They belabour us with statistics and calculations—differing according to their own political opinions—which show with horrible clearness how our cousins are growing mentally and physically. They lead us into a maze of German law and German politics; they give us vague scraps on German art and literature, and leave us with the bewildered impression that we have been shown the internal workings of a huge, ugly piece of machinery which excites alarm, a certain amount of admiration,—certainly no love. And then comes the second

class of what might be called "German Literature." It is the book written by the peaceful British householder himself in leisure hours after his fortnight's trip abroad. He has been to Berlin, and stayed perhaps at a not very expensive boarding-house, and has therefore every right to speak on German society, German manners, and German customs, and to condemn everything off-hand. He has strayed into some German theatre, so he can talk fluently on the German drama of to-day; he has had a furious discussion with a postal official who obstinately refuses to understand his own language, so he can with all justice complain of German officialdom; in the restaurant he has discovered that his reiterated "Kellner!" is treated with less respect than the raised finger of a smart young Prussian officer, so German militarism forms a big heading, with significant side-shots at conscription in general. He ends up with a broad survey of his impressions, which are, as a matter of fact, no impressions at all, but the crystallisation of his own prejudices. On the whole, this second book is a sort of extension on the text, "God, I thank Thee I am not as other men," and it leaves us smugly self-satisfied and aggressively contemptuous; it is pleasant to find that our preconceived ideas of the mannerless heathen which it describes were after all fully justified.

[redacted]omes the third type. It is frankly humorous, and has cast off all didactic pretensions. We laugh from beginning to end at the funny fat German baron, the funny fat German policeman, the funny fat German officer. The author has somehow or other picked up some stray peculiarities, and turns

them to admirable comic effect; and though we are still contemptuous, our contempt has become mingled with a humorous pity.

Of these three kinds we vastly prefer the last two. The first is altogether too serious. It excites our anxiety, and presents us with facts which we would much rather not know, and, naturally enough, awakens no sort of kindly feeling in our hearts for the people it has set out to describe. We are not fond of machines which, to all appearances, are created solely for the purpose of reducing us and our national pride to pulp. The other two books do not alarm us; the one is mildly instructive—we feel that we can afterwards found our instinctive dislike for the Germans on definite authority—the other amuses us. We read both with chastened appetite.

And so we go on, hating, despising, tolerating, or ignoring the race to which we are so closely connected, not according to our knowledge, which is often *nil*, but according to our characters and our inherited prejudices. The many books have not helped us; our short travels have done less than nothing to clear our outlook, overhung as it usually is with insular self-satisfaction. We have stayed at hotels and judged the Germans by so-called "types," which, if they were Englishmen in England, we should ignore as exceptions. Of the inner life of the real "types" the average Englishman knows and sees next to nothing, and he goes home to his own country with the sincere conviction that there is no man like an Englishman, and no country like England.

"Germany without the Germans would be all right" is the text to a caricature in some German

comic paper of a check-suited, flat-footed, much-bewhiskered Englander on the tour of inspection, and such is, as a matter-of-fact, the conscious or unconscious opinion of most of us. And yet—although I would never dare suggest that there is any man like an Englishman—I would venture to point out the possibility that a man may be unlike and still perfectly agreeable, even—be it said in whispers—with his certain advantages. Whereby I have betrayed my standpoint, and let the incorrigible anti-German beware! It is a standpoint, I must hasten to add, taken not out of prejudice nor as the result of unusual circumstances. Ordinary experience alone has led me to regard the people amongst whom I live with respect and affection, but ordinary experience is, paradoxically, the most difficult experience to obtain. This applies not only to Germany but to every country. Nowadays it is within the means of nearly every one, even to the poorest clerk, to travel at least once in a lifetime and see something of foreign lands, but just such a traveller can of necessity only see things from an unusual standpoint—that of an outsider and a guest. Whether he is rich or poor makes no difference. Whether he stays at a cheap boarding-house or at a first-class hotel makes no difference either. The fact remains—he is a guest. Even if he has introductions, and is allowed to penetrate into the circle of certain families, he cannot rid himself of that one great disadvantage, and let no Englishman, be he ever so observant, imagine because he has dined twice at Herr B.'s table, that he really knows what sort of a man Herr B. is, or what sort of life he leads. Her

B., like every other human being, does not carry his heart on his sleeve, and he does not turn out his household gods for the inspection of a stranger. He may be worse, and he may be a great deal better than he seems—of that his guest cannot judge with any certainty.

Perhaps this sounds very obvious, but it is surprising how many people there are who would rightly hesitate to give their opinion on an acquaintance of a fortnight's standing, and who are yet ready not only to criticise but to condemn a whole nation on evidence stretching over an equally short period of time, and based probably on still more superficial observation. This mistake, or whatever you please to call it, is not by any means confined to English people. I suppose it was first brought home to me by an absurd book on England, written by a German after a six weeks' sojourn in my country, during which time he had strayed from one horrible experience to another, under the impression that they were the natural and inevitable experiences of every one. Of course one is indignant over the consequent criticisms, because they are based on—for us—obviously false data. But we must remember that in six weeks an honest, painstaking student of national habits and customs can gather together enough perfectly genuine material on which—unless he is blessed with an extraordinary degree of tolerance—he will consider himself justified in founding a most condemnatory criticism. I have experienced this, alas! in my own person. A year or two ago I was travelling in England with a German friend. I had been foolish enough to boast to her about the politeness of our policemen,

the obligingness of the people in general, the excellent "moral" of our soldiers and sailors. In one month we encountered nothing but off-hand, sulky policemen, insolent cab-drivers, disobliging shop-people, and on one fatal occasion a whole trainful of reeling soldiers on their way to India. Of course, these were exceptions—I knew it; but could I expect my German friend to believe it? That gave me a lesson which I shall not forget, and it has since been more deeply engraved on my memory by the specimens of English people I have met abroad. They have all too often brought small credit to their nation, and I have often wished, when listening to the criticism of fellow-countrymen over the land in which I live, that they could suffer some of the humiliations I have had to suffer! I believe then that they would be more careful of delivering judgment even on the most—apparently—convincing evidence. I believe they would then realise that people can only be judged from the inside, and that it is only possible to judge from the inside after years of intimate acquaintance with their ordinary life. That is what I call learning by experience. It is not learning by experience to travel through a country with a notebook and pencil in hand, picking up statistics and characteristics and building up generalities on what might easily prove to be exceptions. Statistics have no meaning whatever until one has learnt to understand the temper of the people they concern, and, as I must repeat, understanding can only come with years. This leads me to the reason of it—the reason why I have ventured to add a modest volume to the pile that have been written on the same subject. It is not

in everybody's power—much less to everybody's taste—to make their home abroad in order to learn to appreciate the foreigner. It has been my lot to do so, and I feel that a less pretentious effort, made neither by a diplomatist nor a journalist nor a business man, but by an ordinary private person, living the ordinary German life in an ordinary German town, might do more than a dozen heavy statistic-laden reports to reveal the fact that one can be English and yet sincerely, warmly attached to one's German cousins, both as individuals and as a nation.

I do not pretend that my experience is everybody's experience, or that my German year is the year of every distant corner of the Empire. I merely claim that it is typical, that the Germans I have met are typical, and that my impressions are sincere and unbiased.

CHAPTER II

SOUTH GERMAN TOWNS IN GENERAL AND KARLSRUHE IN PARTICULAR

IF I venture to describe Karlsruhe, I do so with two, I hope, sufficiently good excuses—firstly, that I cannot give an account of my German year without the correct *mis en scene*; secondly, that Kalrsruhe is in itself a good type of most German towns. I dare say a great many Germans will protest against this statement. Karlsruhe typical! Karlsruhe representative! I can almost hear the indignation of the Münchener, the Frankfurter, the Mannheimer, and all the rest of those who look upon Karlsruhe and such small "residenz" as the dullest spots on earth. And yet there is, I trust, method in my madness. To take a great commercial centre as "typically German" seems to me a self-admitted error, because the typical German is not commercial. He is not fundamentally a money-maker, and is only acquiring that talent by force of circumstance and through imitation of others. Moreover, where there is commerce in Germany there are always two Jews to one Christian, and the Jew is not a German, much as he would like to be, and it is not in his power or in the scope of his character to live the typical German life. Therefore we can safely put Frankfurt

—of which it is said that every third person may be a Christian, but more probably is not—on one side, together with all similar towns, and look elsewhere. As to München, it is the city of the musician and the artist, and consequently stamped with very marked and individual qualities, not in the least typical of the average German. And then the Münchener, like the Berliner, like the Londoner, is above all things a Gross-Städter, a man of the world who has rubbed off the original characteristics of his race, and his home and his surroundings as a natural result have, in retaining a certain local colour, lost their national distinctiveness. It is in the lesser towns, in the miniature capitals, that one finds the German in his native state, working and living undisturbed and uninfluenced by the foreign stream which flows past to the great cities. Just such a capital is Darmstadt, Stuttgart, Nürnberg — lastly, Karlsruhe. With its own palace, its parliament, its mint, its polytechnicum, its State theatre, its own special laws and ordinances, it is a German town *pur sang*, and the Germans who inhabit it, from the aristocrat of the Court circle down to the little tradesman, are genuine types. I feel, therefore, that in giving a brief description of Karlsruhe, I am giving a fair idea of dozens of middle-sized South German towns. I emphasise South German, because South Germans are in many respects a distinct race from their northern compatriots, and the difference in character naturally leaves its trace upon their surroundings. I shall come back to this point later when I speak of the people themselves. For the present it is sufficient to remark that there *is* a difference, and that I am

concerning myself chiefly with the race with which I am personally best acquainted.

It is a little difficult to draw an arbitrary line between North and South, and there is a large part which belongs distinctly neither to the one nor the other, and must therefore be roughly described as Central Germany. Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden form the decidedly southern element. Of the three states Bavaria is the most important—if only because of its famous capital—but Baden reckons itself, and, to do it justice, is reckoned, "the model state," and in its comparatively small dimensions embraces the most beautiful and richest tracts of Germany. Adorned by the glories of the Black Forest, watered by mighty rivers, blessed with a fertile soil, an intelligent people, a liberal-minded Grand Duke, a liberal-minded government, it is indeed an enviable little country, and deserves the many flattering epitaphs which it bestows upon itself and also receives. Its capital is Karlsruhe—a fact which, as Macaulay would have said, every schoolboy knows. But I have taken into consideration that not everybody is a schoolboy, and that it is just conceivable that the name "Karlsruhe" may awaken, at least in some minds, little but a vague notion that Karlsruhe is, well, somewhere in Germany. Such is my German home, therefore—a town of something over 100,000 inhabitants. If you asked any one of them what they thought of the place, they would tell you without hesitation that it is the dullest place on earth, that there is nothing doing, that the people are stiff and "langweilig," that the theatre is not what it was, that the shops are twenty-years behind-hand in

everything, that the living generally is bad and expensive—*en fin*, that anybody who lives there willingly is an acknowledged fool. After which description you would naturally expect to find the trains filled to overflowing with emigrating crowds. This, however, is not the case. Without any apparent reason Karlsruhe grows from day to day, and the people who once settle never seem to move on. I know indeed of one lady who argued herself into such a state of indignation that there was nothing left for her to do but to go. She tried München, and then she came back. This is the only case that I know of. My German Friend—she may occur often in my narrative, so under this title let her be henceforth known—declares that when she first settled in Karlsruhe twenty-five years ago she felt that she was taking the first step into her grave. I fancy her opinion remains unchanged, but somehow, though we are constantly considering other places with an eye to "moving on," we never really get any further, and I doubt if we ever shall.

As a matter of fact, when the inhabitants have cleared the atmosphere with a good inevitable German grumble, they will generally admit that Karlsruhe has its advantages—especially for a certain class of people. I doubt if the commercial folk enjoy them to the full extent, for, as is natural in a Grand-Ducal "residenz," the privileged classes—the military and official circles—have by far the best of it, but for these latter Karlsruhe has indeed a good deal to offer. It is just big enough to allow for social festivities on a moderately grand scale, and it is just small enough to allow each small

personage to play a big and brilliant part in the public eye. And apart from its social advantages, there are certain other points in its favour which even the most determined grumbler would find it hard to deny. In the first place, it is a comparatively new town. Some two hundred years ago a certain Grand-Duke Karl, having quarrelled with his parliament and, generally speaking, come to loggerheads with his capital, turned his back on the whole troublesome society, and went in search of "peace at any price." He believed that he had found it in a lovely sylvan spot a few miles away from his original "residenz," so, to spite his parliament, and also to repair his shattered nervous system, he set to work and built a castle in the midst of the forest, thereby hoping to have created for himself a refuge from the bickering and nagging of his unruly subjects. Under the mistaken impression that he had succeeded he christened the place Karlsruhe (Karl's Rest or Peace). Alas! this action proved all too premature, for within a short time his renegade people, weary of their loneliness, deserted the old capital, and a few years later their disconsolate ruler awoke to the fact that his peaceful refuge had become a veritable town, and the name "Karlsruhe" a bitter irony. The poor Duke's feelings must have been very keen on the subject, for the stone at the entrance to the old Schloss bears the following melancholy if resigned inscription—

"In Anno Domini 1715 I was wandering in a wood, the abode of wild beasts. A lover of peace, I wished to pass my time in the study of creation, despising vanity, and paying a just homage to the Creator. But the people came also, and built what you here

see. Thus there is no peace so long as the sun shines, except the peace which is in God, and which you can, if you will, enjoy in the middle of the world. 1728."

Surely an irrefutable argument against the democrat who would prove that princes are an unloved and unsought after race!

At any rate, willingly or unwillingly, the good Karl had laid the foundation of a new capital; the old one languished as a punishment for its unruliness, and is to-day an historical but somewhat dirty and uninteresting village, which in time will probably be swept clean and incorporated with the capital as a suburb. Karlsruhe, on the other hand, grew and prospered. In the beginning no more than a semicircle of houses surrounding the Schloss-Platz, it spread out in regular fan-like order until it reached its present dimensions.

Thanks, therefore, to its recent foundation, it is exceptionally clean and well kept. When I say "exceptionally" I mean a good deal, for my impression of German towns as a whole is of cleanliness and order. The clearer, drier climate may account for this to some extent, but I think the real explanation lies in the stern rule of the State or—in this particular instance—of the Town Council whose lynx-like glance pierces into the uttermost corner, and sees to it that that corner is made as habitable and as decent as is humanly possible. I do not think that the Englishman would fancy that lynx-eye, although its interference is on the whole quite paternal, and not half so objectionable as is made out by people who wish to prove that the German is the most police-bullied man on earth. As a matter of

fact he is not bullied—he is "looked after." You can best imagine the situation if you consider every state in Germany as a "House" in some big College, with its *esprit de corps*, its own laws and customs, but under one all-uniting head. To carry the analogy to the end, the people are of course the students, divided into higher and lower classes, the masters the ministers, the ushers—if you like—the police. And the maxim which rules the whole organisation is "that everything is for everybody's good." Of course, this may seem a somewhat humiliating system for grown-up people; but when it is taken into consideration that there are more fools than wise men in the world, and that the folly of fools can be infinitely more harmful than the wickedness of the wicked, it is surely one that has its justification. Be it as it may, this system exists in Germany, and its results are to be seen in every department of life, and not least in the town organisation. I do not say that it is a perfect organisation—there are sometimes quite startling if human lapses—but it is certain that it is an organisation which is toiling laboriously, if steadily, along the path of self-improvement. It is animated, too, by a certain amount of rivalry between the towns—especially between the capitals of the various states. So much exists still of old divided Germany, and so much is undoubtedly beneficial. The consequences are that each town does its best to attain the highest standard of law, order, and progress.

From these points of view Karlsruhe justly reckons itself amongst the first—if not the first. Certainly, to walk through its symmetrically well-built streets is

to gain an impression of light, fresh air, and cleanliness. A whole army of neatly uniformed individuals are busy morning, noon, and night sweeping, watering, and sand-strewing according to orders. Sometimes the orders clash with unforeseen circumstances, as when a watering-cart is seen devotedly performing its duty in the teeth of a deluging thunderstorm, but on the whole they are carried out to the general benefit. And over everything the policeman watches with a paternal, wakeful eye. If you wish to prove his wakefulness you need only leave your own particular piece of pavement in an untidy state, and in a few minutes a polite but firm arm of the law will spring apparently from nowhere to recall you to a sense of duty. I dare say he is very glad of something to do, for his life must be one of deadly monotony. Nothing ever seems to happen. The very horses, when it occurs to them to enliven proceedings by running away, do so at an easy jog-trot, and stop of themselves; a burglary causes as much sensation as a full-grown revolution; the so-called slums are places which, compared to our notions of the term, are paradises of law and order. So the policeman, except on rare occasions, has practically nothing to do but stand about and wait and hope. On the above-mentioned "rare occasions," such as at the time of the Hau trial, when emotions ran high, the military turns out, and there is a quick end to the matter. The military, in fact, is a sort of active maid-of-all-work to the law, and is ready to assist at a revolution or a fire or an accident with the same excellent results. But, as I have said, these occasions are rare. Placidity and general propriety is in the atmosphere, and that

is no doubt why a certain class of people find such middle-sized town as Karlsruhe "langweilig." There are amusements enough, but of a sober type, which would scarcely suit the wilder spirits. A sternly classical Hof-Theater, a couple of music halls—mere cafés, where acrobats and a mild vulgarity help to wile away the evenings for a lower class paterfamilias, and even for the family itself—and a cinematograph of perfectly respectable and even didactic tendencies, are not forms of entertainment likely to lead the unsteadiest into mischief. Whether it is this lack of temptation or the character of the people themselves, or a little of both, I do not know, but certain it is that the streets of Karlsruhe are safe at all hours for people not on the look-out for trouble, and in six years I have not seen either by day or night an intoxicated man, much less an intoxicated woman. I should think the latter does not exist.

There are no beggars; begging is absolutely forbidden in all its forms except at the time of the Fair, and even then there are only one or two cripples, who are neither starved-looking nor ill-clothed. Street organs, German bands, all forms of public nuisance, are unknown. The only noise one ever hears issues from the Wirts-Haüser, where a Gesangs-Verein (a choral society) is gathered together over the beer glass to practice—perhaps a Bach oratorio!

Very little is left to public enterprise, and the people seem satisfied that even their pleasures and recreation should be in the hands of the municipality. They do not consider it any particular privation to be without a private garden. A big shady garden,

as we understand it and love it, is practically unknown —not on account of expense, the richest man in Karlsruhe has no more than a front patch—but simply because no one feels the need of such a thing. They are not in the least exclusive, and the pleasure of sitting shut off from the world in your own little bit of private property has no charm for them. The average South German prefers to live and breathe and take his pleasure with others, and since the municipality provides him with woods and parks and public garden, why should he bother to spend money on something which he must enjoy in comparative solitude? So he keeps his little plot, if he has one, in fair order, and plants a few flowers in it to keep up the cheerful appearance of the street, and spends his free time and his spare money drinking his glass of beer with his family in the Stadt-garten, and listening to the band and greeting his friends. Or, if he wishes for peace, there is the forest and the Wild Park open to him. In this respect Karlsruhe is perhaps unusually fortunate, for so much remains of the poor Duke Karl's first surroundings that it is possible in five minutes from the centre of the town to lose oneself in what seems an endless pine-forest, and forget that trams and motors and crowds ever existed. Bicycling and footpaths are beautifully kept, and one can, I believe, walk in the cool pine-scented shade as far as Mannheim, some thirty miles away. (This is mere hearsay, as personally I have never made the experiment.) All this is public property, and on Sunday it is made good use of by the sociable holiday folk who cannot afford the necessary 20 pf. which gains an entrance into the Stadt-garten, where

a military band, a good restaurant, and a beautifully kept flower-garden, help to bring refreshment to the hard-working German. It is always crowded, and I think the point that strikes a foreigner most in a walk through the unprotected flower paths, even on a grand holiday when children and people of all classes abound, is that no one is rough, no one ill-mannered, no one attempts to touch the flowers or trample on the lawns. There is no paper-throwing or any form of disorder. I am sure, after the fullest day, the gardens are as tidy, as well kept, as they were in the early hours of the morning. Everything, like the people themselves, is orderly and clean and peaceful.

Then, if you are more select, and wish to leave the crowds behind you, there is the Wild Park, the property of the Grand-Duke, who allows you an entrance for the sum of 10 marks yearly as a sort of guarantee. No motors are allowed, and a sylvan peace inhabits the long straight alleés of mingled pine and oak. A rider galloping along the horse-path, a green-coated forester with his dog and gun, a woodcutter or two, the Grand-Duke himself—such are the only people you are likely to meet on your rambles. Numberless squirrels will scuttle across your path, herds of deer will watch you curiously from amidst the trees, and perhaps towards evening a family of wild boars —wild only in name, be it said for your reassurance— will jog comfortably from one shady glade to another, but these accentuate rather than disturb your loneliness. It is as though the place were your own private property, and who can be surprised, therefore, if the Karlsruher neglects to acquire gardens of his own

when he can enjoy so much for a modest 10 mark piece? And even if that sum cannot be spared, there is enough to be had for nothing.

Thus, as I have said, the State or the Municipality takes at least one form of public amusement into its own hands. It lays out gardens in every vacant spot, it arranges for certain enclosures where children can play in safety, for tennis places and football places—the latter to be had for the mere asking. No one, in fact, need feel privation where fresh air and flowers and trees are concerned. But the hand of the powers that be stretches still further into the public life. In a hundred ways the State watches over the welfare of its charges—its children in every sense of the word. It even makes it its business to see that the guileless public is not swindled by quack doctors with quack medicines. Almost any day you will find in the official paper a large printed notice issued by the officer of health warning against some patent medicine (how many popular English remedies have I seen thus held up to the light of ridicule!), and woe to him who endeavours to foist wares on to the public which are not all they are said to be! Again there is scarcely an institution of real value to the general population which is not partly or entirely supported either by the Grand-Duke or the town. Thus the hospital—one of the most modern and beautiful in Europe—does not depend for its existence on capricious charity. It is the property of the town, and is arranged to receive every class, from the poorest to the richest. The theatre does not depend on the favour of the public; it is the property of the Grand-Duke, and can afford therefore to be good. The

trams and railways are nearly all State, and consequently the conductors and railway officials, down to mere porters, are decently uniformed, and not allowed to perform their duties in any rags they choose. So it is in every branch of life. Everything is organised, nothing left to the slipshod, haphazard notions of the muddler, or of private companies bent on their own gain. No doubt the system has its grave disadvantages. Personal charity is discouraged, and there is a general lack of public initiative. I think this latter is the worst evil. It is almost as though the system of "being looked after" has paralysed the spirit of undertaking. What the State does not do no one does. And the State is sometimes appallingly slow and cumbersome in its movements, so that reforms are dreamed of in one generation and executed in the next. Even the shops seem infected with the disease. No shopman tries to do better than another, in cheapness or in quality or in novelty. He shrugs his shoulders at you if he cannot supply you with what you want. "We don't keep it, and so you won't be able to get it in Karlsruhe," they say. And they are perfectly right. It is the same everywhere. Where the State's hand is at work, you can be sure that it is for the general good and that it will be thoroughly done, but the State has no idea of hurrying itself. It takes its time, and there is no public spirit to arouse it or to take its place. And even if the public spirit is momentarily aroused, it is quite powerless. The State also shrugs its shoulders. "Take it or leave it—just as you like. *I* don't care!" Whereupon the public spirit is immediately subdued and humbled.

Added to all this, there is a good deal of necessary but not very pleasant interference in private life. To look after its children the State has to employ an immense army of officials, who have the right to appear in your house any time of the day, and ask any idiotic question that may occur to them. They are always very polite and apologetic, but it is their business to interfere, and so they interfere to the best of their ability. I say this out of the bitterness of my heart, because in reality I know that the interference is necessary to the State plans, but it is none the less irritating and tiresome. Of course the German grumbles, but I do not think he minds in the least; he takes a grievance or an interference as a necessary evil, and is thankful that he has not to bother about putting it right.

Hence you have in Karlsruhe some rather startling contradictions—elegant tramways in one street, a miserable little railway in another; admirable sanitary arrangements in one house, an antiquated if healthy enough system in another; admirable police, and a fire-brigade of aged amateur muddlers who arrive on the scene of action an hour after everything is over. Of course, one day all this will be regulated to an equal state of perfection—as soon as the Powers begin to move. But the Powers are very slow, and the public are incapable of spurring them on. One has to wait and be patient.

This is the worst I have to say. Taken as a whole, Karlsruhe is a healthy, orderly, successful town, having its counterparts in every State in Germany. The German spirit is slow but thorough, and it is

a natural consequence that the towns it builds should be slow but thorough also.

So much, therefore, for my German home. Let me now pass on to the people amongst whom my German year is spent.

CHAPTER III

THE TWO TYPES

LOOKING back to the innocent days, when I knew nothing at all about Germans and disliked them heartily, I have a vague recollection of having always had two distinct types in my mind's eye. The one was a tall, fierce-looking individual with a monstrous Kaiser-moustache, an insolent stare, and excessively bad manners. He was the sort of person who pushed ladies off the pavement, and was generally notorious as a swaggering, spur-clicking, Schwert-rasselende bully. He was the type which I fancy Mark Twain once described when in a serious mood, and was altogether detestable. On the other hand, there was the second type—a stout person with glasses, a drooping, untidy moustache, long greasy hair, and a passion for poetic outpourings. He was very exclamatory, easily moved to tears or laughter, ready to embrace every one at first sight, and if not exactly detestable, at any rate deserving of a mildly amused pity.

These two types exist to-day—in our literature—and are as immortal as the flat-footed, horse-toothed, bewhiskered lamp-post in loud check trousers and grey top-hat, which is still recognised on the Continent as the "Typical Englishman." Of course that type

of Englishman—if he ever existed at all—is as dead as the period in which he lived, and we nowadays may well wonder over the caricature which in our eyes has no resemblance to the reality. I suppose, therefore, that the German has the right to wonder over the two distinct pictures we have made of him. Of course, all three are pure caricature, which have just sufficient truth in them to make them laughable. Here and there it is possible ro run across a cadaverous-looking Englishman, with a Baedeker and field-glasses, who bears a family likeness to that old type, and here and there one does meet with Germans who remind us of the pictures we have seen or the accounts we have read. The truth is, that in their desire to make fun of each other each nation has chosen out the extreme—one might almost say exceptional—types of the other and labelled them as "typical." I have experienced the same thing in a small way. I once walked through the streets of Karlsruhe with a newly arrived English friend, and noticed how she passed over all the good-looking, well-set-up people, of which there were plenty, and waited until we met an uncouth-looking specimen, when she nudged me.

"Isn't that a typical German?" she exclaimed.

Of course he was not in the least typical—he was the exception. What she really meant was that he was the "typical exception"—that he could not have been anything else but German. But no doubt she still cherishes the idea that most Germans are like him, just as most Germans believe that English people are lanky and ugly and extremely rude.

Revenons à nos moutons! Where and how have our too distinct pictures of the Teuton been found?

As a rule we do not bother to reconcile them. We know that the one is there for the use of the serious author, who wishes to impress his reader with the brutality of the German creature, and the other for the humorist who wants a ridiculous puppet to poke fun at. And yet there is the inevitable grain of truth. There *are* two types of Germans, and if the difference between them is exaggerated almost beyond recognition, it exists none the less.

The Prussian is of course the swaggering bully, and the South German the fat sentimentalist. The great distance of land which separates them, the difference of climate, are quite sufficient to account for the difference between the two great types. The bitter northern winds, the long stretches of bleak and barren territory, has made the North German a man of iron, stern, resolute, reserved. The rich, fertile soil, the mountain sides covered with vine, the warm sunshine, has made the South German easy-going, cheerful, emotional, and expansive. Hence the Bavarian gentleman recognises the Prussian even before he speaks. Not as in England, the hall-marking characteristics do not confine themselves to the lower classes. The gentleman is proud of his "dialect," and in fact of everything which publishes his origin and birthplace. This is the case not only between north and south, but between one State and another, between one district and another. I have known a rich educated man who fiercely objected to his daughter being taught "hoch Deutch," although her dialect was limited to a certain minute tract of land, out of which no one understood her. Of course he was old-fashioned. The tendency nowadays is

to rub off all distinctions, and gradually the differences which mark the Black Forester from his brother from the Palatinat, and so on, will disappear. But the greater distinctions remain, and will always remain, just as certain characteristics will always divide the Englishman and the Scotsman into two races.

In Germany the differences were, and to some extent are, the outcome of political divisions. Forty years ago they were fostered and cherished as a proof of patriotism. Then a man was theoretically German and practically a Bavarian, or a Prussian, or a Hanoverian, with the particular interests of his own particular State at heart. Now, though the name "German" has been given, both theoretically and practically, the prime importance, "local patriotism" still flourishes side by side with the old grievances and dislikes. Let it be made at once clear that these are no more than sentimental. They are of no real value whatever; and the man who cried out for the redivision of Germany or the overthrow of Prussia as the ruling power, even if he stood in the midst of a crowd of rabid anti-Prussians, would be treated as a harmless lunatic. Still, just as the German of all classes loves to grumble, so he loves to emphasise his hatreds and his reasons for their existence. Hence the North and South Germans are declared enemies. To hear them talk one would imagine that an ocean divided them, but I fancy it is all talk. At any rate, the differences are not so great that one cannot sit between them at a dinner table and be equally charmed with both. The Prussian is perhaps more correct, more tenacious

with the forms and ceremonies; at the end of the meal he will shake your hand and wish you "Gesegnete Mahlzeit" with a deep bow; the opinions he expresses are strongly conservative and imperial. The South German, on the other hand, skips over formalities if he can do so with safety—especially if you are a foreigner; his manners are easier and lighter; he has liberal, even mildly democratic, tendencies; you see, in a word, in every detail, the far-off glimmer of the characteristics which go to make up the genuine people of the South. But these distinctions are by no means so striking as to stamp "truth" upon the caricatures which I described at the beginning of the chapter. The Prussian's stiffness does not for an instant amount to rudeness or even abruptness, nor is he in the least the wooden bully of the fables. Nor need you be afraid of the South German breaking into either sentiment or raptures; and indeed, unless you are very wideawake and on the look out, you may never realise that there is any difference at all. Or perhaps your right-hand neighbour may tell you that the South German is a "schlappiger Kerl" (careless, slovenly fellow), and your left-hand neighbour that the Prussian is "ungemütlich" (untranslatable, but infers stiff and unpleasant), both in low-voiced asides, which arouse you to the fact that you are sitting between sworn foes. As I have said, I do not think the antagonism is of much account. Your two neighbours are probably bosom friends, except in theory, and I have noticed that the North German, though he is loud in his contempt for his careless, devil-may-care compatriot, is quite ready to join in his devil-may-care

ways on the very first opportunity offering itself. Certain it is that the Prussian officers who are commanded to South German regiments never want to go back to their native soil. They grumble at what they call the "slovenliness" of the South German soldier, and the more easy-going discipline of his officers, but there is a mildness in the atmosphere, a warmth in the Rhine wine, and a cheery, happy-go-lucky air about every one, which even the stern discipline-loving Prussian cannot long resist. He too melts, and as time passes he shrinks involuntarily from the thought of the icy northern winds and the rigour of the northern discipline. And, after all, the relaxation, such as it is, cannot be accounted very serious, at any rate from a military point of view. True it may be that the Prussian soldier is a shade "strammer," the buttons on his uniform a shade brighter, that the Prussian officer is a shade more punctilious in the accomplishment of his duty, a shade more the man of iron and blood as Bismarck loved him. But what are shades of difference, especially when they are atoned for, as in this case, by so much Mutterwitz, good-humour, and good-nature?

In private life, where the individual is freer to follow his inclination and temperament without fear of reprimand, the differences become less shadowy, more noticeable. The south German loves to take things comfortably; he has a weakness for the *dolce far niente*, which the Italian manages with so much grace, but which nature never meant for the sturdy Teuton. He was meant for exertion in storm and sunshine, constant hard work and bitter privations,

and up to the last years Providence has seen to it that he has had enough of all three. Thus his tendency to take things easily does not suit him as far as outward matters are concerned. It shows itself early in life as a "letting himself go," a certain slovenliness in appearance and habits which calls down the ire of the North German and the contempt of the foreigner. To give an instance: a middle-class man (I say "middle-class" with reservations, because *our* middle-class does not exist in Germany; "educated" would be perhaps the better term) does not think of changing into evening clothes unless on some really festive occasion. On the contrary, he slips into the oldest and most comfortable garment he possesses, with the irrefutable argument, "Why shouldn't I be at my ease after a hard day's work, and why should I put on my expensive clothes in order to partake of beer and cold meat?" Even when he goes to the theatre he does not trouble to change. In the first place, evening clothes are not "evening" clothes for him. They are the correct garments to assume at all great functions, at whatever time of the day; and theatre-going is not a great function, it is part of his daily life, part of his daily work, one might safely say, for what German family of only moderate means does not have its season ticket? Added to this, he does not care for appearances, and he knows that no one of his position, does. So long as he has a title of some sort to hall-mark him as a man of a certain position he knows that no one of his set—the only set he cares about—will venture to criticise him or his clothes. So he goes about in his happy-go-lucky way, and the slight,

good-looking, smartly-dressed student loses his figure and his smartness with painful, astonishing rapidity. It is the same with his wife, at whose devoted head her northern sister thunders the epithets of "disorderly," "extravagant," "careless," "untidy," and "inelegant." She, too, takes matters "auf die leichte Schulter." As soon as she has got her husband her most serious business in life is at an end, and she proceeds along the dangerous path marked as "gemutlich." Not that she is without pride, but it turns on position rather than appearances. If she is a Geheimrätin (the wife of a councillor), she can wear mittens and cotton gloves and dowdy dresses without shame—in fact no one bothers what she wears. But I must emphasise that all this applies only to the South German, and then chiefly to one particular class—the educated class. The self-same Geheimrätin in Prussia has already a certain style; her interests are more equally divided between her position and the way in which she should represent it. Her husband may even attend *dinner* in evening dress, though she is not likely to follow him so far as to assume *décolleté*. Even in South Germany there is a class which lays considerable stress on outward form and appearance—that of the aristocracy. Of course, where the aristocracy is poor—as it very often is—elegance is still lacking, and no one thinks anything about it, but where there is money as well as name you at once find all the outward refinements of life observed with true German thoroughness. Thus it is possible to attend a South German theatre on a festive night, and, without having seen the people before, to pick out the aristocracy simply by their

dress and general appearance. I myself have attended a ball where I was able among the hundred guests to pick out the one solitary "von." And in this I was only led by the cut of his coat, and a little by the general appearance of the man. It goes without saying that there are glaring exceptions. I know a certain baroness who might, without any stretch of imagination, be taken for her own cook, but these exceptions occur in every country, and cannot be taken into account.

On the same scale the North German of privileged birth is still more "correct," still more careful to be dressed according to the dictates of custom and fashion. In making this statement I must warn against all exaggeration. The average South German is not the uncultured, unwashed yokel of the novels. At his worst he is a little rough and ready, a trifle "derb," a trifle indifferent to outward things, but he rarely fails where the politeness and refinement of the heart are concerned. And even the occasional lack of polish is beginning to be a thing of the past, and will disappear altogether when the German has acquired riches enough, and has had time and experience enough to apply them to his physical and material culture. The accounts of German family life which I have read in certain English novels belong, for the most part, to a state of things which may have existed two generations ago. Certainly they do not exist nowadays. A great deal has already changed, and a great deal will be changed within a very short time. For excessive culture and refinement in a State and in a people is always the signal of decline, and the Germans are not declining; they are

advancing fast, and in the advance are learning to acquire polish as well as strength.

To return from prophecy to my friend the South German, I must say in his defence that his easy-going habits extend only to physical matters. He is a hard and willing brain-worker, and the spectacle of a "man of leisure" is a rare sight. He has infinitely fewer holidays and longer hours than the Englishman, and the worst thing that can befall him is to be deprived of his occupation, even though it be by old age. It is this tenacity, this love of work for work's sake, rather than commercial talent, which makes the German a dreaded rival. He may be inclined to be slovenly in his dress, and he may not care very much whether his clothes are well or badly cut; he may grow stout from want of exercise (as I have said, Nature intended him for hardship, and when things are physically too comfortable for him she revenges herself with an avoirdupois which an Englishman is spared, even though he eat and drink double), but in his office he is unpitying, with himself and with his subordinates. And he is highly educated, not only in his profession but in other branches, in art, in music, and in science. It would not be too much to say that the average German knows more about English literature than the average Englishman. From a mental standpoint he is inexhaustible, and perhaps quicker and more intelligent than his northern brethren, who are physically stronger and more active.

The same criticism applies to the womenfolk. Physical activity is new to them, and has come too late to save the present generation of mothers from

stoutness, but mentally they atone for all other shortcomings. I shall have occasion to speak of the much-despised German woman later, so that for the present I will confine myself to her Herr Gemahl, who is a good-hearted, cheerful, industrious person, extremely sociable, intensely sensitive. This last point is a very important one to notice, if you wish to live with him in peace and amity. He is easily hurt. He has not been through the rough-and-tumble of an English public school, and even his year with the troops has not hardened him The abuse of the under-officer does not affect him, as coming from an inferior, and the chaff of his equals is always kept within bounds. The very real existence of the duelling system is at the bottom of the courtesy with which the men treat each other; and no matter how young he is, a German will be careful to treat his comrade, his comrade's family, and his comrade's opinions with a certain respect, as things which are guarded by the sword and the pistol. Hence the German's sensitiveness, which is part of his character, is fostered by circumstance, and often brings him into conflict with his Anglo-Saxon cousin. The Englishman, it must be admitted, has very little consideration for other people's toes when he is on the Continent. I have known really nice English people who thought nothing of making fun of some German custom in the very face of the Germans themselves, and I must confess that I feel nervous when I have English friends to stay with me, lest they should blurt out their opinions and cause an irreparable disaster. Moreover, they are not given to expressing their gratitude or admiration in very ardent terms, and

consequently the German is very often hurt indeed. To say merely "Thank you very much" to a German after an afternoon tea or some such mild form of hospitality, is equivalent to saying "I have not enjoyed myself in the least," and you will be put down as cold and ungrateful. Not to express voluntary admiration, whether it be over a dress or a dinner or a work of art, is to be intensely disagreeable. It does not matter how bad or how ugly things are, you must always hide your feelings behind elaborate praise. This is the German's form of politeness—never to say anything disagreeable. It is not the shallow, cynical flattery of the Frenchman. In nine cases out of ten he means what he says; his good-nature is ready to make the best of everything, and he can more easily persuade himself that things are really beautiful than bring himself to utter the brutal truth. He shrinks from harsh criticism, and he dislikes to administer it. Not that he is incapable of criticism. He is perfectly willing to abuse himself and all his belongings, from his house to his Kaiser, in the bitterest terms, but if you are led away to agree with him, you must be prepared for the worst. He will never forgive you.

This painful degree of personal and national sensitiveness often brings a newcomer in the Fatherland into difficulties, and has cost many an Englishman his chance of popularity. But once you have learnt to treat his feelings with respect, you will find the German the most amiable, kindly host, and the most thankful and enthusiastic guest. A little understanding, a little sympathy in our public and in our private life—alas, how little is necessary and

how much less is given!—and perhaps we should not hear so much of "strained relations," and "Anglo-German incidents," and "war scares." We might build up an *entente cordiale* with our cousin—surely a more natural and fitting one—and grow to admire him and like him, as I trust, reader, you may feel more inclined to do when you have travelled through my German year with me.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAGIC CIRCLES

WE are preparing to give a dance—a very small one, be it understood, but not on that account less weighty with anxiety.

English hostess, if ever it seems to you on the eve of your great ball that you have been through more worry and bother than the whole thing is worth, that you have borne enough to exasperate an angel, that you are altogether the most harrassed person living, console yourself with the thought that your German sister has difficulties to contend with of which you know nothing. True it is that once she has got her guests together they are the easiest people in the world to satisfy, but until that blissful moment what troubles and problems have to be overcome! Can you imagine an ordinary residential town of about 100,000 inhabitants, and can you imagine those inhabitants divided into compact little circles which will have nothing to do with each other if they can help it, but rotate on their own axis in proud independence? Cliques, you will suggest. No, "clique" is not the word. A "clique" is a French thing, and this is essentially German. It may exist in modified degrees in other parts of the world, but only in Germany does it reach full

perfection and attain the dignity of a national institution. Every German and every German woman belongs to a "Kreis"—a circle—and there are as many circles as there are professions. There is the exclusively Court Circle, the Aristocratic Circle, the Military Circle, the Official Circle, the Law Circle, the Musical Circle, the Art Circle, the Learned Circle, the Commercial Circle, the Jewish Circle, and so on *ad infinitum*. And they are all independent, all more or less exclusive. How they came to be formed is hard to say. The Court and Aristocratic Circles are natural growths, and I dare say the others followed as a matter of fashion, or perhaps as a sort of "slap back." (If you are shut out yourself, it is always a satisfaction to shut some one else out.) Some, no doubt—like the Jewish Circle—were inevitable. At any rate, there they are, and if, as sometimes happens, a husband belongs to one circle and the wife to another, severe complications can set in where entertaining is concerned. It must be admitted, however, that this constellation of circumstances is rare. A German usually picks out his wife from his own circle, or if he should look elsewhere, his choice is usually swallowed up, little by little, in her husband's *entourage*, and drifts out of her original sphere.. The latter proceeding must be almost as painful as giving up one's nationality. I cannot imagine a Fraülein von X. marrying Herr Fabrikant Z., and not retaining an inborn contempt for his friends and his ways; I cannot imagine either that his friends will ever forget that she is an an Aristocrat and an outsider, or cease to suspect her of arrogance. I cannot imagine a Fraülein M. marrying a Herr

von N., and ever feeling herself quite at home amongst her husband's people. If she is experienced, she will know that the first question they will ask is: "Was für eine geborene war sie?" and that the answer will remind them that she is not "One of Us." Hence people marrying out of their own circles must be prepared for some bad moments, and the practice is not encouraged.

I have just given examples from the two largest and most important circles—the Aristocratic and Bourgeois—but I could give examples from all the others, which are circles within circles. If they are less strictly defined and exclusive from a matrimonial standpoint, they are still socially all-important. A lawyer's friends are lawyers, and if an officer or a professor or a doctor drifts into his "dinners," he is and remains an outsider—almost a foreigner. The professor clings to his colleagues, and has no interest for any one else, and his wife must choose her women friends from the same circle. It is obvious, therefore, that if a host, through exceptional circumstances, has friends in more than one circle, it behoves him to be careful. Not that it would be exactly a *faux pas* to invite the professor with the officer, but it would undoubtedly be a deliberate flying in the face of the good fairy who presides over successful social gatherings. The officer and the professor would, of course, be exquisitely polite, but they would have nothing to say, and both would go home grumbling at each other and at the host. This is perhaps an extreme case, because the two professions stand in every country at opposite poles. I can put the case clearer when I observe that, if you are inviting

officers, it bodes well for you if you manage to get them all out of the same regiment. If you give a mixed party, you will see at once that the mixture is a failure—that, in fact, the guests do not mix. The situation is still more marked when officers and civilians are invited together. In a moment the "Gesellschaft" divides itself into two distinct camps, the civilians keep to one side of the room, the officers to the other, and nothing on earth will bring them together. They will be exaggeratedly polite to one another, and this alone is enough to spoil the "Stimmung." And even worse would be an invitation which included Jews and—we will say—officers. Such a proceeding would be regarded as unpardonable tactlessness, and is almost unthinkable—it makes me quite uncomfortable even to suggest it.

Of course, what I have said, with the exception of the Jewish question, applies itself more particularly to small "evenings." At a big ball or reception, where the elements lose themselves, it is safe to invite any one you know, so long as each circle is sufficiently represented to prevent any one from feeling that he is an outsider. In any case it is rare for a host, unless he be in a high State post, to belong to more than one circle. An instance may be given in the case of a professor of noble birth, who, besides his professional circle, belongs naturally to the Aristocratic Circle; or of a foreigner, whom the German does not count. For the German is more generous than his Anglo-Saxon cousin; he does not apply his rules and standards to any one but himself. The Baron Z. will be quite ready to accept the English manufacturer as a gentleman, because he knows that

in England his own prejudices to not exist, and that in England a manufacturer can be, and very often is, of good birth. But towards his own people this big-heartedness at once stops. For the most part the Baron will only associate with his equals, the officer with the officer, the professor with the professor, and so on. I am speaking now as always of the South German, but in this particular instance my remarks apply with even more truth to the North German, who is in every way more exclusive and conservative. The Prussian officer is far more intolerant of the civilian than his southern comrade, and if he is "adelig" (noble), he is far more inclined to show his contempt for the bourgeois.

This brings me to touch on the two great divisions in German society—the aristocracy and the middle-classes. As I have said, in North Germany the division is more accentuated. The South German, as becomes his lighter, more easy-going character, *can* overlook such distinctions, and sometimes he does, but not often. For the Kastengeist (caste-spirit, or whatever you like to call it), is by no means dead in Germany. It may be diminishing, but certainly it is still sufficiently powerful to inspire an outsider with awe, and at first indignation. When I first came to Germany I thought the whole system a disgraceful piece of narrow-mindedness, but gradually I grew accustomed to the idea, and now look upon it as a matter of course, and with as much sympathy as a foreigner can feel for an entirely German way of looking at things. I must confess that the system sounds distinctly snobbish. The officer sounds snobbish when he is talking about the

civilist, the barrister about the merchant, the Herr von So-and-So about the simple Herr Schmidt, the Geheimrätin about her next-door neighbour, the titleless Frau Müller. And yet somehow the Germans do not impress me as a snobbish people. Perhaps it is because the German, though his name and his title are everything to him, does not boast about either—there is, in fact, nothing for him to boast about, because he is always with people of the same rank, and does not care to be with those whom he *might* impress, or perhaps it is because his snobbishness rarely takes the most objectionable form of "purse pride." The time has not yet come in Germany when riches alone can buy position. The poverty-stricken scion of an old and noble family still counts more than the *parvenu* with millions; the most exclusive doors open to the ring of a good name, when Money-Bags jingles in vain. The position of the Jew proves my point. Not all the pressure in the world has enabled the wealthiest Jew either to buy his way into good society or into the army; the merchant, unless he have something else besides his money to back his pretentions, cannot hope for connections in any other circle than his own. The elect hold tenaciously together, fighting desperately against all new-comers, and especially against the new-comer who tries to buy his admission. Snobbish it may be, narrow-hearted if you like, but for my taste it is an evil with a healthy tendency—it rejects money as a touchstone; it has surely a nobler savour about it than the hideous kow-towing to wealth, which flourishes elsewhere, and I confess that I prefer the needy German baron with his sixteen quarterings

and *his* snobbishness to our friend Sir Simpkins, with his bought title and *his* snobbishness, which is the most pitiful thing on earth. At any rate, there the fact stands—of all the circles of German society that of the aristocracy is the most exclusive, the most tenacious of its privileges. Other circles may relax their severity towards each other—the Geheimrätin, the Frau Professor, the Frau Doktor, the Frau Kommerzienrat may all recognise each other as equals and sometimes as friends, but the aristocrat stands apart. It is not that he never enters into foreign circles—he does so, sometimes, because in these democratic days circumstances compel him, but he remains an exile, and he is only really at his ease amongst those of his own position. By the other circles he is looked upon with mingled feelings. The good bourgeois families—those who themselves can trace back honourable if unadorned names into the earlier centuries—look upon him with respect, and are proud if they figure on his visiting list, but there is a class by whom he is detested with a truly "sour-grapes" detestation. The rich parvenu, the self-made man with democratic tendencies, the Jew, all these pour their spite and bitterness over the "junker," and are loud in their mockery of the "Kastengeist" which thrusts them outside the pale. Hence in the German Witzblätter, where the democratic spirit is at its height, you will always find the nobleman and the officer depicted as an imbecilic, degenerate, arrogant ne'er-do-weel. There is no truth in the picture—no more than if a social-democrat were painted as a red-capped anarchist going about with a bomb in one hand and a bloody knife in the other—

it is simply the venomous outpourings of a great class-hatred. The nobility *is* an openly privileged class—not only in society, but in every branch of State business. In the army the titled officer has always a greater chance than his "bürgherlicher" comrade, and plain Lieutenant Schmidt knows that unless he manifests exceptional abilities he is fairly certain to stumble at the fatal "Major's-corner," as it is called; that unless he has proved worthy of having the patent of nobility conferred on him for that purpose, he will never be able to hold a high post. And in every case where the State is concerned the same rule holds good—family before everything. No matter how poor the family may be, so long as it is honourable, it can always reckon on the support of the reigning house, and in fact of every one belonging to the mighty Brotherhood. All this, naturally enough, excites extreme bitterness and hatred in the hearts of those who, perhaps more successful, see the gates shut against them because of their meaner birth. They see in the system a contemptible injustice, an absurd relic from the feudal ages. And yet it must be said in defence of the much-abused Kastengeist that it has its reasons, and it has its virtues. One of the virtues I have already mentioned—its hereditary indifference to wealth; another is that though the nobility shut their doors against the wealthy *parvenu*, they fling them wide open to the Genius. The rich Jew will be passed over, but the poor musician, the struggling painter, if he possess the divine spark in his soul, can hope for the highest privileges in the land, and not hope in vain. I know of cases without number where untitled painters and musicians—

peasant's sons some of them—have been the guests and intimate friends of the reigning Duke, and have associated in the very circle where, had they been the richest merchants, they would have been ignored. The spirit which animated the old nobility in their patronage and love of genius exists to-day, and is one of the many reasons why the spirit of Art is at home in Germany, whereas in other countries it is more or less a pampered exile.

Thus in justice we cannot call the aristocrat narrow-hearted, unless it is narrow-hearted to pick and choose the people with whom one wishes to associate. This he certainly does, and those who wish to pass into his magic circle must undergo a severe test. It is not sufficient, as I have pointed out, that a man should be wealthy, that he should be well dressed and have good manners. (The first of these advantages can be *bought*, the second is expected of every one.) The questions which will be asked of him are: "What is your name? Who was your father? What was he? What are *you*?" If the name should be Schmidt, the father a tradesman, there is only one hope left in the question, "What are you?" and if the candidate can answer, "I am a good musician, a good painter, a genius even in a small way," he is saved, and he becomes a welcome guest even amongst the highest and the greatest. This is hardly snobbery; it bears within it the germ of a great idea—the idea of a class which is really elect, which really concentrates within itself the best and noblest blood of the nation. Does the democrat protest that the best and noblest blood is not to be found in the aristocracy, that birth and family are

nothing, no guarantee for anything save perhaps degeneracy? I can only answer that I have no theories, and that I can only see what my eyes show me. And my eyes show me that the aristocracy of Germany—I include every grade from the baron to the Imperial family—is one of the finest, if not the finest, in Europe, and that amongst its members are to be found the best qualities of the Teuton—fidelity, Pflichtgefühl, and partiotism—developed to the highest pitch of which they are capable. Let there be no exaggeration. There are counts and countesses who would be far better in the kitchen than in the Court ballroom; there are young scions of great houses who are in an state of over cultivation, and consequently have lost all trace of greatness; there are cads and scoundrels in this mighty family, as there are in every family on earth. But I maintain that in the bulk the German aristocracy has a right to its pride and a right to its exclusiveness. It *is* a privileged class, not because of its past, but because its present bears the motto, "Noblesse oblige," and because it honestly strives to live up to its own high standards. No doubt the "Noblesse oblige" is carried too far; it leads men and women to exaggerate the gulf between them and the other classes, and to maintain an almost Hebraic aloofness from everything and every one suspected of being "unclean," but the principle is a good one—even a great one. "We must not only abstain from evil, but from the appearance of evil," is the great law which governs the German nobleman's life. Hence, almost inevitably, the aristocracy shrinks back from the race for wealth. Let us imagine all the sons of our own

nobility, from the duke to the lowest knight since time immemorial, having inherited the titles and positions of their fathers, retaining the original pride of race, brought up to despise money-making in all its forms, and to hold King, country, and name before all other earthly goods, and consequently growing steadily poorer, and we have a fairly accurate picture of the German aristocracy as it stands to-day. I must repeat that there are always the exceptions, and no doubt the exceptions are increasing. Hard times are driving the sons of old families into business, and the slow advancement in the army, and the inadequate pay, keep many from following the hereditary profession. But the old spirit lives, and has life in it to last for many generations to come. So long as it retains its loyalty, its high standard, its rigid code, its inimitable power of sacrifice, it will always be a mighty force in the nation. It is not always easy to live up to that high standard—the sacrifices are often very real, and sometimes tragic. I know personally of cases where gently nurtured women have endured hardships which would have disgusted an English scullery-maid, and brought sacrifices—sometimes of a whole life's happiness—which would have been more than enough for the sternest ascetic, simply in order that the last representative of their name might live as became his rank and follow the profession of his fathers. And let no one throw stones at that last representative because he accepts the support and sacrifices of women. He is only obeying the law which governs his class, and he, too, has a bitter struggle to fight behind the seeming splendour. All this for a name

—a phantom! It seems at first a pitiable waste of human strength and energy, and yet I suppose all ideals are phantoms; and surely better ideals of this sort than none at all, better these fetishes of name and honour than the Golden Calf! Moreover, these ideals, phantoms though they seem, have helped to make the German nobleman a man apart, not only in his opinions, his faults and virtues, but in his appearance. I have no real explanation or theory to offer; but, as I have remarked before, it is possible for any one with moderate powers of observation to pick the nobleman out of a crowd of ordinary people. Is it that he has inherited a certain cachet, is it that his position has lifted him to a certain dignity, a higher sense of personal responsibility, his education taught him more consideration for his physical well-being? I do not profess to know. Probably everything has combined to produce in him a distinct type. At any rate, wealth has played no part in the make-up, for the German aristocrat is, as I have said, poor, and his life is one of extreme simplicity. The simplicity is not that of the bourgeois—often no more than indifference and lack of cultivated taste—it is the simplicity of the Spartan, stamped with refinement, and no matter in what circumstances he lives the nobleman is unmistakable. When he has the advantage of wealth, his inherited taste and culture are allowed full play, though they scarcely ever lead him to extreme luxury, and never to ostentation. He dresses well but simply, and his whole life continues to be marked with a certain dignified quiet. At the bottom, though he appreciates the power of wealth, he does not admire it for itself, and he does not care

for it to be admired. He would consider it bad taste to flaunt his money in the world's face, and he avoids all "show." Refinement of living and a quiet elegance are his sole luxuries, but they divide him widely from the circle beneath him.

The circle beneath the aristocracy is the so-called middle-class, which, if *solide*, is usually neither very refined or elegant. Here, too, there are exceptions. I know bourgeois families altogether charming in themselves and in their mode of life—I speak simply of the mass. It is the mass of this circle which the Englishman describes when he comes home from his German holiday as "typical," and he compares it to the well-to-do middle-class in England, finding therefore sufficient reason to laugh at the small, cramped life which his German equivalent leads. But the English middle-class does not yet exist in Germany; it is an exclusively English class, just as the nobility in Germany is an entirely German class; and if it is to be compared at all, it can only be compared to the wealthier section of the German aristocracy. But then this aristocracy is reserved and exclusive, and the average English traveller sees nothing of it. I remember my own surprise one evening when a Gala opera was being given in honour of some royal birthday. I was comparatively new to German ways and German people, and it was a revelation to me to see the finely built, often elegantly dressed, men and women who replaced the usual dowdy audience. For the first time I was brought to realise the existence of a quiet world living entirely its own life, and showing itself rarely to the vulgar gaze. Yet this world is the world to which the English

gentleman belongs, it is the only world he has the right to compare with his own. Professionally he may belong to the same class as the Doktor Shulz or the Fabrikant Müller, but in culture and upbringing he belongs "higher up." It is the average Englishman's mistake on this point which leads to a whole string of misconceptions. We will suppose that Mr. Smith, lawyer, goes to Germany with an introduction to Herr Schmidt, Rechtsanwalt. He will probably find that in everything—in manners, in style, in mode of life, his host is at least several grades lower than himself. The Herr Schmidt may be the kindest-hearted man alive, but he is possibly in everyday life a rather slovenly, stuffy, disorderly person, who would not think of changing in the evening and, perhaps, neglects the morning tub. He lives in the style of a small tradesman, but from a professional standpoint and also in education he is Mr. Smith's equal. His sons will no doubt live as we consider a gentleman should live, but he, poor man, has fought for his position too hard to have energy enough left to strive after refinement. He belongs to a class which has struggled up heroically from the people, and in a hand-to-hand battle with poverty won for itself the first great step upwards—education. It is educated, highly educated even, but the struggle has given it no time or opportunity to attain the outward polish which English people of the same positions were already beginning to cultivate thirty or forty years ago.

As soon as we realise that outward culture is only the result of *inherited* wealth, we shall understand why the German middle-class is so far behind our

own that we can hardly compare them. Doctors, professors, architects, lawyers, small officials—they belong for the greater part to the tribe of the "Spiesz-bürgherlicer" But it is only a question of time before a class will arise out of their midst and form a real and worthy bridge between the aristocracy and the lower orders. How short that time will be I will not venture to say; but the German, now that he has overcome his old stumbling-blocks, disunity and poverty, is moving fast. Gradually the upward striving middle-class, the wealthy and travelled merchant, the nobleman with his ideals but without his prejudices, will drift together, and, meeting at last on common ground, form a compact whole, the great bulwark of the nation and the immense force which, whether it be in peace or war, we shall one day have to confront.

But all that is in the future. At present the dividing Kastengeist, having for its *raison d'être* very real differences, still exists and holds class from class, profession from profession. The Grosskaufmann, with his wealth and resulting luxury, but without social position; the professional man with position, but as yet without wealth, and consequently lacking outward culture; the nobleman with his inherited culture, but ever lessening wealth, stand apart and take small interest in each other.

But the gulf has narrowed, and is narrowing with every year.

CHAPTER V

KARLSRUHE SOCIABILITIES

MY Karlsruhe friends—like most South Germans—are sociable rather than hospitable. That is not to say that they are inhospitable—which would be a base calumny—but if they can meet together without any grand outlay for entertaining, why, so much the better. And the reason therefore is extremely simple—most of them cannot afford it. The first fact that every one must grasp in considering German life outside the great cities is that riches, even moderate riches in our sense of the word, are still rare, and where they are not rare they are at least so new that the possessors have not learnt to use them. They cling tenaciously to the careful, economical ways of their neighbours, and an invitation, no matter how small, is always an Event.

I know an English lady who came to Karlsruhe with very warm introductions, and was disgusted because one family fulfilled its obligations towards her with an afternoon tea! She would have felt differently if she had known what preparations, what anxiety that tea had cost! I suppose she thought that the cakes and little sandwiches were the usual things, and that she had been simply asked

to share in a common household meal. But indeed no! Each cake, each sandwich was a luxury indulged in on only great occasions; and had my English friend paid a surprise visit she would have found the family drinking coffee, at most, with an accompaniment of rolls and bread and butter.

Thus to be invited to a tea in Karlsruhe, whether it be chez the countess or the simple bourgeoise, is always more or less a serious business. There is no idea of "dropping in." "Dropping in" is in fact a very rare custom. People pay their formal calls at twelve o'clock before dinner, and are usually not even received. The called-upon knows that the caller is on a mighty round, and the card tells her all that the caller wanted to say, "Don't forget me when you are inviting—I have called!" In the afternoon only the most intimate members of the circle are allowed the privilege of "dropping in," and even then the treatment of the "dropper-in" (forgive, reader, the truly German temptation to coin words!) would shock an English hostess beyond expression. We will suppose that you are an intimate friend of Frau Schmidt. Chance has led you to call on her familty at tea-time. She will receive you with open arms, you will be planted on the sofa in the place of honour and implored to stay—but no refreshements will be offered you. If there are other members of Frau Schmidt's family present they will slip out one by one, and return with a pleasant odour of coffee about them. And you must not be surprised or hurt. Frau Schmidt is really delighted to see you, but it does not occur to her that you might want the coffee or the plain bread and butter which formed

the rest of her repast. But if she asks you to tea that is quite another matter. Then she moves heaven and earth and all the confectioners in Karlsruhe to make the invitation a magnificent function; and you, as becomes so serious a business, will be expected to take off your coat and hat and prepare to make an afternoon and an evening of it. According to your hostesses' means and position it will be a terrible or a tolerable time—I must confess that it is not likely to be amusing. We will suppose that she belongs to the well-to-do aristocracy. In that case the entertainment takes the form of an "at home," to which both sexes are invited. Tea is handed round, and people wander about and talk to each other or listen to the music. For of course there is always some one in the company who can either play or sing—usually very well. So far so good—quite *a l'anglaise* except for the last point—but the difference comes in when you realise that it is a GREAT INVITATION. You cannot wander in for half an hour or so and then wander out again. You have got to stay—unless you are possessed of unusual cunning—right to the bitter end. And the bitter end may be anywhere between seven and eight o'clock. In these "at homes" the four-hour sitting is tolerable, if only because of the mixed crowd and the consequent amusement of being able to watch and observe; but a really genuine "Spiesz-bürgherliche" afternoon tea-party is the most deadly and exhausting thing I know. It begins at four o'clock, and it goes on inevitably till eight. There are usually two sets of people invited—young girls and old ladies. After an enormous sit-down

tea, in which everything is present in the edible line from Caviar Brötchen to ices, the two parties divide and sit huddled together in adjoining rooms, and are bored to extinction. No one dares move until the eldest lady decides to take her departure, and as Fate has it that she must always be the one and only person to enjoy herself, there is no hope of escaping before the four hours have elapsed.

Thus you can see that a German afternoon tea can be a ponderous and serious thing, not to be despised and not to be partaken of in too large quantities. It has the fault of most German entertainments—it lasts too long. A German dinner-party has exactly the same disadvantage. It is not that so much is eaten or drunk, but it never comes to an end. The people sit and sit and talk and talk till you would think that no human constitution could stand more, and as every one uses his natural voice, the confusion is sometimes nerve-wracking. Of course the dinner is a very Great Event in most families, and it is an honour to be invited. In fact it is an honour to be invited to anything, and that is why Karlsruhe hospitality is usually rather constrained, rather formal. The invited knows the grandeur of the occasion, and is consequently too awed to be at his ease.

As to the practice of receiving visitors for an actual stay, it is the rarest thing of all. As I have before intimated, the South German's tendency is to let himself go in his own home, and the anxieties and efforts which the presence of a stranger entails exhausts him. It is not as though a guest could slip in with the rest of the household; special arrange-

ments have to be made on his account, and many inconveniences suffered. In North Germany this is different; there the country life gives a greater freedom and opportunity for hospitality. In South Germany the flat-system and the extreme simplicity in which the German lives, is in itself a barrier against a constant flow of guests, and one can safely say that for him the greatest luxury possible is to invite. And yet, as I have said, he is sociable. No man on earth more so. The Englishman, in spite of his "open house and week-end visits," etc., is a recluse and a hermit compared to the Teuton, who is never so happy as when he is with other people—in a crowd if possible. Whatever he undertakes he likes to be in company. Hence flats and crowded railway carriages have no horrors for him; he detests "English hotels," because English people do not mix with strangers, prefer separate tables, and hold themselves generally aloof. His wife and his children are just like him. On their travels they are ready to make friends with every one, and at home they organise their Kränzchen. Show me the German woman or the German Backfische who does not belong to a Kränzchen! If it is the Backfisch it can be any sort of a Kränzchen—a Tanzkränzchen, an Englischkränzchen, a Französiche-kränzchen, a Nähkränzchen. A certain number of her school-friends (of the same circle, *bien entendu*) come together once or twice a week and read, sew, or talk English or French together. They take it in turns to visit each other's houses, so that in one winter each family has had the Kränzchen once. Her mother's life is built up on the same system. She, too, belongs to a Kränzchen. I know quite elderly

women who regularly, twice a week, read Shakespeare together in English with the assistance of an English teacher. Others, the grandmothers chiefly, play whist together, or work together, in fact do anything so long as it is *together*.

On the other hand, club life is almost unknown amongst the masculine element. It is considered "bad tone" for a man to go out in the evenings without his wife, and the whole rigour and seriousness of an English club would anyhow appal the German's cheerful, talkative temperament. To sit for hours in dead silence and read the newspapers is a proceeding which has no sort of attraction for him. One newspaper is enough, and that much he can enjoy in the bosom of his family. Curiously enough, the lower one goes in the social scale the more one finds "societies" which dimly resemble the club. Every little shopkeeper belongs to a Verein. It is usually a "Gesangsverein." A few dozen men of the same class join together, and once or twice a week meet in a Wirtshaus (public-house) and sing—sometimes under the direction of a proper teacher. I do not think the neighbours care for it, but that is a detail. There are, of course, other Vereins for shooting, bowls, for the old soldiers, etc., but the idea is always the same, mutual support and the pleasure of being together for a set purpose, with as little expense as possible.

These Vereins and Kränzchen play a very important part in German social life, and to a great extent take the place of regular entertaining, but they do not, strictly speaking, include hospitality. In the Kränzchen, for instance, the members sit

together for two hours or so and then go away—probably without having partaken of any form of refreshment. No inhospitality is meant. They arrange to have their tea beforehand, and thus the hostess is spared all expense and trouble. I think this capacity for living, from a social standpoint, without material sustenance is proof of the German's extreme love of company. If the inevitable cup of tea was ignored in England, I am quite sure that afternoon calls would droop and languish. In England the cup of tea is the *raison d'être* of the whole performance. So long as she has a cup of tea in her hand, so long the English guest can hold out with gossip. Five minutes after she has said "No more, thank you," she goes. The business of the afternoon is over. The German lady is different. She comes to talk, to read, or to work, as the case may be, and tea would be an interruption and a nuisance. The other day we invited a young musician for the evening—after supper, of course—in order that we might play some trios together. I was too English not to insist on some sort of refreshment being handed round, so we made the most delightful little sandwiches and cakes. Great indignation on the part of our guest as, after the first "movement," the edibles were handed round. "We are here to play—not to eat!" was his stern protest, and, crushed and humbled, I hurried my offerings out of sight.

There is one form of entertainment which must not be forgotten where youth is concerned, and that is the Tanzerei. Everybody in Germany dances passionately, if only for the never-to-be-forgotten reason that

it is an excuse to come together, and consequently everybody, rich or poor, endeavours to give a Tanzerei at least once a year. A Tanzerei is not a ball, and English people would hardly honour it with the title of dance. It can take place at any time in the afternoon or evening, and there are rarely more than eight or ten couples, but of all typical German forms of pleasure it is the most delightful. Here there is no stiffness and formality. The drawing-room carpet is rolled up, a piano player engaged, everybody dances with everybody without programme, games are played—the more childish the better—and the German reveals himself as a charming, unaffected host and guest.

In the well-to-do families a Tanzerei is always delightfully arranged—an elegant ball in miniature —with a dainty sit-down supper and a profusion of flowers; but perhaps it would be of more interest to describe the genuine "Spieszbürgherliche Tanzerei" —the great social effort as made by a family of the class which I have already designated as "educated."

I was invited to just such an entertainment shortly before Christmas. The host was, of course, a man with a long title, the hostess a stout, good-natured, motherly person with three plain daughters, the place of entertainment a far from commodious and somewhat stuffy flat of eight rooms. English prople in the same circumstances would not have dreamed of giving a dance. They would have thought it beneath their dignity to reveal such a shabby condition of things. They would have saved for years, or got into debt, and hired a hall and

a caterer, and done the thing in style. They would have been ashamed of everything, knowing pretty well that their friends would have put the price on the wine and the food, and known exactly how much the new dress had cost, and whether it was new at all, or only a turned and dyed edition of last year's. But mine host was not in the least ashamed—he had no reason to be. He knew that everybody knew who he and what his income was, and that his friends, living no better or worse themselves, would not be critical, but come and enjoy themselves, and make the best of everything. And I, knowing what I was to expect, did likewise. Punctual to the hour I clambered up the steep stone steps which led to the third floor, in company with other little parties of guests, most of whom had come on foot with wraps and goloshes. We smiled uncertainly at each other as we stood crowded together on the landing, and after a moment an excited little maid with a white cap and apron—for the occasion—opened the door, and with grins and nods, as though she were joint hostess and delighted to see us, led the way into the bedroom which had been turned into a ladies' *garde-robe*. No doubt it was the eldest daughter's bedroom, but everything personal had been cleared away, and everything was in immaculate order. There was, of course, a great deal of giggling and whispering amongst the younger members of the party. Everybody was fighting for a last glimpse in the little looking-glass, and pathetic appeals, "Marie, Elsa, is everything all right behind?" were loud, until at last we were ready, and a general move was made towards THE room. THE room was

the salon, and mine host's study, which had been sacrilegiously demolished of its solemnity and turned into a second ball-room for the overflow. The carpets had disappeared; stiff plush chairs were arranged around the walls; the parquet flooring glistened threateningly at unwary feet, and told its tale of a long afternoon's polishing, in which—who knows?—even the Geheimrat himself might have lent a hand.

A few guests had already arrived, and were standing about in little groups. For the most part they consisted of young people who, as always in English eyes, looked a good deal older than they really were (in Germany a girl is distinctly *passee* at twenty-five). The elder folk had already retired to the chairs, and one could see how the cheerful matrons in black silk and straining gloves were exchanging compliments on their respective daughters. With a little previous experience one could follow every word they said.

"Ach, liebe Frau Professor, how charming your Elsa is looking to-night—so much grace and Anmut! And that sweet dress—how it becomes her! I wish I could get something so "passend" for my Marie!"

Tears of gratitude and motherly pride rushed to the Frau Professor's bright eyes. I could not see them, but I knew they were there, because I know the Frau Professor.

"She made it herself," she then began to explain eagerly. "I cannot tell you how hard the poor child worked to get it done in time. Is not the stuff wonderful? It looks like silk, but it isn't. It's a

new stuff, which looks just like the real thing, and is half the price."

General exclamations of wonder! It was then the Frau Professor's turn to tell her friend how "reizend" Marie was, what sweet manners, what grace. Everybody was sincerely delighted with everybody else. Everybody was "ein Herz und eine Seele," as they themselves would have said. I looked about me. I picked out the much prized Marie and Elsa, and discovered them to be plain, good-natured-looking girls in rather short and decidedly home-made frocks, modestly *decolleté*. Their masses of heavy, somewhat colourless hair was done neatly, but without much taste, and they wore white mittens. Altogether my English friends would have thought very little of them, I am afraid, but they were enjoying themselves as though they were kings' daughters and wore queens' dresses. The elder and best-looking of the three house-daughters was *tête-a-tête* with her fiancé, a serious young man, who appeared some years older than he really was—perhaps the problem of a double *ménage* on nothing a year worried him. Mine hostess told me that the Braut was nearly ready with her trousseau, and that it was very grand indeed. I could quite believe it, since it had been the object of the most careful thought for at least two years. Altogether the Gehiemrätin was in great spirits, and she sailed proudly from one little group to another like a frigate with every stitch of canvas stretched. Her husband, the Geheimrat, was less prominent. A shy little man, in a badly-fitting suit of evening clothes, he gave the impression of being

nervously pleased, and much in awe of his wife's *sang froid.*

At last all the guests had arrived, twelve declared dancing couples, and the elderly people who might be tempted into a waltz later on in the evening. Only one person was still lacking—the Orchestre. Then he too arrived—a stout gentleman with a bundle of old music under his arm, who, after a courteous inclination towards the rest of the company, seated himself at the piano against the wall, and plunged boldly into the "Blue Danube." I must mention that the Orchestre is a great person in Karlsruhe. Everybody knows him—he is the patron at every feast, rich or poor. In the daytime he gives music lessons, in the evening, for the sum of 10 marks, he will play you dance music till your feet are worn out, beaming the while on the whirling couples with kindly paternal interest. And what feeling there is in his waltzes! No wonder the Geheimrat threw off his embarrassment, and with a deep bow offered his unpractised powers to the Frau Professor, a very portly person in mauve, who looked, should any accident befall, as though she would inevitably crush her cavalier out of all recognition. But fortunately the Geheimrat had a good eye and a firm arm. He steered round the little room with complete success, and the ball thus opened proceeded merrily. As usual there were three or four superfluous men, passionately fond of dancing and equally anxious to have their turn, so that there was no rest, no sitting-out (sitting-out in any form is absolutely tabooed everywhere). One or two of them danced very well, the greater part moderately, one or two

skirt-rendingly, but well or ill they all danced. There were no laggards, and they bumped or piloted their partners round the crowded room with equal cheerfulness. And their manners were exquisite. Yes, it is not to be denied that their coats were far from being well cut, their shoes not all above criticism, their whole appearance neither elegant not *distingué*, but they had a kindly honest courtesy about them which atoned—obliterated—everything else. They did not dance as though it were a favour, or wander about with their hands in their pockets looking intensely bored. They did not leave the conversation to their partners, and answer in sulky monosyllables. They appeared grateful for attention, and did their uttermost to be entertaining. I noticed this latter feature at the supper-hour, when, on the arm of a young architect, I was led into the dining-room. Truth to tell there was little of the dining-room left. It was all table, with just enough room at the sides and end for the chairs and the people who were to sit on them. But what did it matter if there was scarcely room for one's elbows? We were all in such good spirits that the constant apologies to one's neighbour only added to the general hilarity. Thus we began the feast. It was a very simple affair. Cold meat, ham, and sausage (alas! I am fallen so low that I have a shamefaced liking for German sausage, which is made of gee-gee and bow-wow, as every Englishman knows!) with Italian salade came first, followed by cheese and Pumpernickel, the whole accompanied by bottles of wholesome, if somewhat sour, landwine. All through this repast my young architect never stopped talking

—in fact everybody talked, and as loud as they possibly could, so that it was difficult to hear your own voice. But my companion had good lungs, and somehow or other kept me thoroughly entertained. At last, after all the necessary toasts had been given, we returned to the "ballroom," and the fun continued until one o'clock, with intervals for lemonade and beer, handed round by our earlier acquaintance, the excited maid-of-all-work, who, in spite of fatigue, was still as cheerful and smiling as ever. We danced the lancers with stately gravity, the minuet-waltz with grace, the Française with a truly wonderful "go," but at no time did we descend to romping. Everything retained a certain stamp of decorum and good order. After midnight signs of fatigue made themselves manifest; the air had become distinctly "dry," and the dancing had been kept up with such vigour that everybody was beginning to think of the home journey. A last waltz was ordered. The Orchestre poured forth a pot-pourri from his whole repertoire, and one danced with everybody in turn. Then the piano's tone grew softer and slower, a last trill, a last run, a general sigh, half of exhasution, half of regret, that one cannot partake even of good things for ever, and the Great Evening was at an end. Of course there was the inevitable standing about and talking; congratulations pour in from every side, and I, having long since learnt my lesson, was not backward in my expressions of gratitude and admiration. Consequently my kind hosts and I parted on the best of terms, and I wended my way homewards with the satisfaction of knowing that it had been a "typical German evening."

Do not, I beg, look contemptuous and say, "I told you so! That is just the sort of third-rate uncouth sort of entertainment I should imagine the Germans enjoying." It is, as a matter of fact, typical of one class, but there are other classes and other entertainments which would no doubt surprise you. Moreover, I must remind you that my Geheimrat is poor. He may be well-to-do in his own eyes, because he has neither pretension nor vanity, but *you* would catalogue him as poor, especially considering the price of living in Karlsruhe. Thus, if he were what you would call refined, he would not be able to entertain at all, and would have to live in a misreable state of solitude. And solitude is the one thing he cannot stand, so he entertains, and does it in the only way his means and his consideration for the future allow him. No doubt it is a very inelegant bourgeois way, but then he *is* bourgeois—"spieszbürhgerlich," as he is described by his own countrymen—and it is quite good enough for his tastes and the taste of his friends. Moreover, there is something so harmless and natural and friendly in the whole thing, that unless one is blinded by prejudice and snobbery of the worst type, it is impossible not to feel warmly towards the host and lenient towards the feast. I am not even sure that there is not an atmosphere in those little evenings which is healthier, saner, more human, more genuine, more *promising*, than in the grandest London functions, and I make no pretence at jeering at the fashions of the simple Geheimrat and his simpler Geheimrätin. They lead the simple life because they are simple, and they are such elemental folk, so unpretentious and natural,

that one can see straight through to their hearts, which are above all else honest and kind. For my part that is all that matters, and he who can afford to jeer at the dowdy clothes and the beer and the sausage has my sincere sympathy!

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTMAS

GERMANY without Christmas — or better — Christmas without Germany! For me the one state is as unthinkable as the other. After comparing my experiences, I can but come to the conclusion that there is no country in the world where Christmas flourishes with so much of its old truth, so much of its own true feeling—in fact, where Christmas is so intensely "Christmasy," as in the Fatherland. I do not want to hurt anybody's feelings with this statement, and I must at once admit that my experience is not very wide. It extends only over England, France, Belgium, and Italy, and I have no doubt that, for instance, the Yankees make the season an occasion for great magnificence, the Russians for pomp and ceremonial, and so throughout the whole Christian world, each land imprinting its own national characteristics upon the festival.

I am afraid my recollections of an English Christmas are rather dull. The one real joy was the Christmas shopping, but the day itself was like a glorified Sunday, on which one ate a good deal more than was good for one, and had to maintain through plum-pudding and every other similar evil an appear-

ance of unabated cheerfulness. In my childhood, I believe, the matter was better; there was the thrilling excitement of the stocking which kept up a genuine animation until after breakfast, but then things fell rather flat—it was impossible to get away from the feeling that it was Sunday. In Rome my feelings were entirely different. Strange as it may sound in this stronghold of early Christianity, in spite of pomp and ceremonial, Christmas itself seemed absolutely out of its element. I could imagine it as a lonely, unhappy spirit wandering amongst a crowd of strangers, who, whilst loading it with beautiful and precious gems, neither understood its heart or its language. Where I was staying the people had erected a magnificent Christmas tree, and covered it with glittering decorations of every description, but—somehow it was not a real Christmas tree, any more than the Christmas itself was real. It was a transplanted thing, artificially kept alive in a foregin soil. Perhaps the very pomp of it all stood in the way, for I always think of the Christmas Spirit as a simple little child, who would be very happy to sing carols beside a tiny shrub in some poor German garret, but would shrink back involuntarily from the offer of gems and rich incense. And it is that childish, open-hearted simplicity which, so it seems to me, makes Christmas essentially German, or at any rate explains why it is that nowhere else in the world does it find so pure an expression. The German is himself simple, warm-hearted, unpretentious, with something at the bottom of him which is childlike in the best sense. He is the last "Naturmensch" in civilisation, and the Naturmensch is always naïve,

always single-minded, whether for good or evil. There are fewer problems in his character, fewer dark, mysterious places, fewer Machiavellian twists and turnings; his heart is easily stirred, easily moved to respond to the touch of all that is sincerely, truly human. With such a man the "Christkind" can be itself without make-believe and artifice—it can display its humblest attributes, which are its noblest, and know that he will understand, that he will treasure it the more because it was born in a poor manger, and carries no richer gift in its feeble hands than an all-embracing love. Yes, all that is something for the German "Gemüt!" It suits the German as well as a play suits an actor for whose character and temperament it has been especially written. He revels in it, and I really believe that the German Atheist "understands" the Spirit of Christmas better than hundreds of good Christians from other lands. Perhaps the atmosphere helps. Perhaps the crisp north winds blowing over the Black Forest, where the fir-tree bears its burden of virgin snow, waiting for the hour when it shall be called thence to decorate some human home, carries with it a mysterious perfume, a mysterious something which I cannot describe, but which I feel and understand. Perhaps the knowledge that all those around me feel it and understand it as I do makes its power all the greater. It seems to bring us all, rich and poor, friend and foe, into a wonderful communion which we cannot and will not resist.

I write this whilst the snow is still on the ground, and I can still feel vibrations from the emotion which the great evening stirs to life in most German

hearts. That sounds as though *only* German hearts could experience it, but as I am English the contradiction is obvious. I merely mean that there *is* something in the atmosphere, and that whereas in England Christmas was for me a much over-rated festivity, it has become a time of real deep rejoicing to which I look back with tenderness, to which I look forward with hope.

So much for the "Stimmung"—or at least so much as the reader no doubt cares to hear about it, for personally I could go on for ever with my efforts to describe what is indescribable. Nevertheless, as I fear the word "Stimmung" may reoccur often in this chapter and elsewhere, I will hasten to explain for the benefit of those who have not been initiated into the mysteries of that great and untranslatable German word, that it means the "something" which can unite an immense assembly of strangers in one bond of enthusiasm, of joy, or of sorrow. It is the longed-for guest at all festivities, the silent companion in every hour of general mourning and at Christmas—why, at Christmas it is everything, everywhere. It hovers in the streets, in the gay shop windows, over the Christmas-tree—it follows the Christkind wheresoever it goes, and without it Christmas would be no more than a cold and dreary spectre.

And now for facts, and I would that the mysterious Spirit which I have endeavoured to describe would guide my pen and help me to touch them with the charm which they possess for those who know a German Christmas! To begin with, I must mention a peculiarity which, I believe, is Karlsruhe's very

own. As a rule extremely indifferent to fashion, which it follows—so the bitter saying goes—some ten years after, it is yet very attentive to seasons. Carnival is signalled immediately after Christmas by the appearance of fancy dresses and masks in the shop windows; on Ash Wednesday everything pertaining to such frivolity is bundled out of sight, and one sees the most unlikely objects labelled as suitable presents for confirmation candidates; after that comes Easter with its eggs, and Easter hares in every conceivable form of eatable stuffs, more or less dangerous for the human constitution. In summer there is a lull, during which the shopkeeper seems to lose interest in life, but from October onwards one notices a slight stir. Half-shamefaced indications are to be observed which are intended to remind the passer-by that the hour is not far off when he must be prepared to open his purse as wide as it will stretch. And then, lo and behold! we have scarce passed into drear November when bold notices bearing "Weihnachtsgeschenke" in fancy letters, with holly and icicles for ornamentation, appear in the shop-windows, and skates dangling in long rows are marked for the benefit of the ignorant shopper as "seasonable." Few people buy anything save perhaps those with relations in far-off countries, and the shopkeeper remains fairly unobtrusive with his suggestions, but Christmas is already in the air. Three Sundays before *the* day the signal is given, not only in Karlsruhe, but all over Germany. It is the so-called Copper Sunday, when all the shops are left open so that the poor folk from the country, bound all the week by their business, may also come

and take their share in the general present-buying.

The title "Copper" is derived from the merchants' expectations and realisations, which, on the first of the three Sundays, are not very great. For the country people share the common human failing of "putting things off," and, knowing that they have time enough before them, they let the first opportunity slip past. But the next Sunday shows an improvement; the streets are more crowded, there is an increased hustle and bustle; here and there one sees an old Black Forest peasant with his long black cloak flapping about his knees, his red waistcoat, his flat felt hat, and the inevitable umbrella. His wife walks sedately at his side, her costume answering to the locality from which she comes, but usually with the quaint wing-shaped head-dress of broad stiff silk. The bulk of the crowd, however, is composed of the population from the neighbouring villages, all in their best clothes. Everybody comes; grandparents, husband and wife, children of all sizes and ages, young men with their "Schatz," all eager to buy and get rid of their hard-earned savings as fast as they can. And the shopkeeper washes his hands in invisible soap, and beams. It is the Silver Sunday! In the week that follows the excitement scarcely abates, for the Karlsruher, who on Sunday yields place to the visitors, has much to do to make up for lost time. At last! The Golden Sunday is there! Well may the eager, exhausted, but always cheerful, always willing servers rush from one customer to another, trying to do each and all justice. They are great men in their profession, these servers!

They know their people—"Sie kennen ihre Leute!" They do not say, "What may you wish to buy?" when the countryman with his family march stolidly into the shop. They know that such a question would throw him into the greatest possible confusion. They pick up the nearest object at hand and hold it out to him as though it were an art-treasure. "This is just the thing you are looking for!" they exclaim triumphantly. "Just see how elegant, how beautiful, how useful, how cheap! It is the latest fashion. We have sold hundreds. I am sure it is exactly what you wanted." And of course it *is* just the thing he wanted, and he is most grateful that the fact has been pointed out to him. He goes off with his treasure, and the shopkeeper beams upon his subordinate who has thus adroitly exploded one more damp firework. This procedure occurs chiefly in the so-called "cheap shops," where you can buy everything in a small way that the ordinary human requires; but it is altogether rather characteristic of the Karlsruher salesman, who treats his customers as though they were only partly responsible for their actions, and not to be too much humoured as regards their tastes and wishes. At any rate, thus the eager shopping goes on, and as the time draws nearer a veritable emigration to the station adds to the general bustle. Everybody who does not belong to Karlsruhe is *en route* for home. Officers in civilian clothes—rare sight!—and soldiers in their very newest uniforms, with quaint little bundles and the cone-shaped cases with the helmet which is to cause thrills in the hearts of the village maidens on Sunday—such are the chief elements in the great exodus.

And at length the evening arrives! One would be inclined to think, judging by a last glance at the streets, that every one had left their shopping to the last moment. The bustle, if anything, has increased, although the hour of the "Besherung" (present-giving) is almost at hand. And indeed it is surprising what a lot of little odds and ends crop up which have hitherto been overlooked. Perhaps the star at the top of the tree has broken and a new one has to be bought in all haste, or the candles have run out or the tinsel has proved too tarnished, thanks to its annual use. So some energetic soul rushes out at the last moment to make the necessary purchases. I need hardly mention that all over Germany Christmas Eve, and not Christmas Day, is the great time. Christmas Day is more or less a church festivity, and, except that the present-giving is over, is quite English. For my part I like the evening ceremony best. In the early morning you feel cold and sleepy —"nüchtern," as the Germans would say—and you have scarcely time to enjoy yourself before the hour of church is at hand, and the "Stimmung" is abruptly broken, or at any rate turned in another direction. But on Christmas Eve the good spirits may mount from degree to degree without check or hindrance. The early morning indifference melts; by the afternoon you have begun to remark that you are just "in the mood" for Christmas; by six o'clock the sight of the gay shops and the bright faces has warmed you to a glow of excitement in which there is mingled a soft-hearted, and, alas! all too ephemeral tenderness towards your fellow-creatures. Seven o'clock marks the high tide. Let me

suppose that you are one of the mysterious workers who for days past has been rushing to the door to intercept letters and parcels, and hold back inquisitive and hopeful people who are desperately anxious to know if the yellow "Gepäckwagen" has not brought them something. Your post has proved no sinecure. Apart from the difficulty of trying to answer questions without telling the truth, and without telling a lie, there is some genuinely hard work connected with the preparations. Imagine a magnificent green fir-tree some ten or eleven feet high, with branches numerous and broad in proportion, and imagine that it must be decked from head to foot with every conceivable ornament, with candles, tinsel, wax angels, glistening balls, glass icicles, and frost-covered acorns. Everybody, of course, has his own ideas of decoration, but the general rule is the brighter and gayer the better. What a work it is! Even when the hero of the evening is crowned with the triumphant golden star, there is still much to be done. The presents have to be arranged—rarely on the tree itself, for in our magnificent days the fir-tree's sturdy arms would not be strong enough to support the burden—but on tables, each member of the family having his own. All through the day the room in which the great ceremony is to take place is rigorously shut off; but at seven o'clock the folding doors are thrown open, and an eager, impatient crowd of old and young swarm through with many "oh's" and "ah's" of admiration. And indeed our green friend is a magnificent sight. All the lights have been turned out, and only the candles affixed to the broad branches have been left to throw their cheery reflec-

tions on the faces which cluster round. One of the twigs has caught fire, and there is a delicious indescribable "Tannenduft," which, if you shut your eyes, transports you far away into the heart of the great forest, and further still—back to all the Christmases you have hidden in your memory. But there is no time for fancies or recollections. The reality and the present are all-powerful, and you must take your part in the general uproar. Everybody is delighted, everybody—in true German fashion—declares that it is the finest tree they have ever seen, that it has been decorated as no tree was ever decorated before, and you, the worker, stand proudly by, an object of gratitude and profound admiration. Only a short moment is given to the proud fir-tree. Already eager eyes are wandering round the room in search of *the* table, longing for the moment when all mysteries shall be swept away. But in Germany you must be patient—or rather you must allow yourself to be worked up to the highest pitch of excitement by endless procrastinations and delays. No one must touch or even study his table until the time-honoured carols have been sung. So the musical member of the family is hurried to the piano, and the rest crowd round and join lustily in the favourite "Oh, Tannenbaum, oh, Tannenbaum, wie grün sind deine Blätter!" or "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht," until human nature can bear no more. Then the signal is given—a general sigh of relief, a general rush! The rest I need not describe to you. In the confusion of flying paper, bursting strings, exclamations, congratulations, and thanks there is nothing very national—except perhaps in

the last item, which is, of course, Teutonically exuberant.

So an hour passes, and then dinner is announced amidst sounds of satisfaction, for unless you are one of the impatient spirits who has not been able to resist the temptings of the edible gifts, you have an excellent appetite. The meal is not a very big one, however, most people prefering to keep the great feast for the following day, and perhaps it is just as well, for I doubt if the Stimmung would stand the strain of a genuine Christmas dinner—I am convinced that it would get decidedly sleepy. As it is, everybody remains in the best of spirits, and after the usual toasts have been given the confusion in the fir-tree's Throne-Room is cleared away and games are played. If there are children, so much the better. If not, the old people become children for the occasion. Nothing is too young or too foolish, and I am not sure if the old children are not the most foolish of all. In the midst of the uproar the door opens mysteriously, just wide enough to admit a huge parcel, which falls like a bomb in the more or less surprised assembly. The unseen anarchist closes the door, the packet is seized upon, and the name of the addressee read aloud. The receiver opens his parcel disgustedly, for he is German, and knows what awaits him. The first layer of paper reveals a second address, and thus the parcel passes from hand to hand, growing smaller with each change, so that at the end nothing remains but a tiny little box, which at last reaches the right owner. Let him beware! Let him remember his sins, his weaknesses, his dearest little peccadillo, and be prepared to find them laid bare before the world in

doggerel rhyme, accompanied by some appropriate "present." Has the Backfisch with the two magnificent braids and the red cheeks been coquetting with the young ensign from the Grenadiers? Her gift may be a tin soldier wrapped in a high-flown poem such as Backfisch love. Has the poor English innocent been guilty of some frightful, humiliating error in the German tongue? Be sure that it has been treasured up throughout the year for this occasion, and that the wit of the family has exerted his powers to the uttermost to bring it home to the victim. Such is the Jul-Klap, one of the oldest German customs dating far back into the heathen days, when it had no doubt some other and long-forgotten meaning.

This ceremony over, the games are resumed, until the family, exhausted but extremely happy, gathers up its treasures and retires to bed, leaving the patron fir-tree, whose candles have long since sputtered out, to silence and darkness. Such, then, is Christmas Eve, so it is in modified or glorified degree in every home in Germany, from the Emperor's palace to the peasant's hut. Pay a visit to the market-place a few days before Christmas, and you will see that it is not only the well-to-do who stand in anxious discussion before the forest of fir-trees which await purchasers. There is, for instance, that poor old woman, thinly clothed with a shawl over her grey hair, bearing off a tiny shrub with such pride and love that one would think she had won the King of the Black Forest. Probably she will not have enough to eat on Christmas Eve, unless some kind soul takes pity on her, but at least she has her tree,

and when the great hour arrives she will light the two pale candles and stand before the glory of it all with the glad knowledge that even she is not shut out from the universal rejoicings. Or, if you will, take a walk through the streets before your own festivities begin and look into the lighted windows. Everywhere you will see the same picture. Everywhere, in garret and in palace, the world is paying homage to the green-king of Christmas time. It is not, as it is growing to be with us, an essentially children's festival, though I wish every English child at least one German Christmas, if only for the sake of the unrivalled toys; it is Everybody's Festival, as it was surely meant to be, and it does not matter how old or how poor or how lonely you are—you must take part. But it is difficult to be old at such a time, and still more difficult to be lonely. If you have no family of your own, some other family is sure to hold out welcoming arms, unless, of course, you are a second Scrooge. On the whole, however, guests are very seldom seen in the circle, because no German would dream of willingly absenting himself from his own hearth. It is the one fixed time in the year when, whether from far or near, the various members of the family assemble together under the paternal roof, and he who stays away is accounted heartless and indifferent. Thus, unless your own family is in itself large, you must be prepared to spend your festivity in a small circle, for guests are decidedly rare. Perhaps a stray officer, left in command over the holidays, or some homeless exile whose people are far away over the seas, will come and assist your merriment, but one cannot count on them. It

once happened that my German friend and I were left solitary through unforeseen circumstances, but we did not let that spoil our Christmas. Quite the contrary. We took the greatest pains with our ten-foot tree, prepared each other's tables, and sang carols (with rather curious accompaniments, for, alas! we are neither piano *virtuosi*), and to reward our efforts the Christmas Stimmung did not in the least fail us. I am afraid that, had I been left to myself, I should have been content to leave my Christmas to the cook, and let the rest of the ceremonial go as "not worth while," but the German spirit was unconquerable, and not a detail was neglected.

As to Christmas Day there is not much to be said. At nine-thirty one goes to church for the service which begins at ten, and one can be thankful to find breathing room. For the Germans—even if they have not been in church the whole year—always put in an appearance at Christmas and Easter, with the result that unless one goes early it is impossible to find a place. After church comes the great dinner—sometimes enlivened with an English plum-pudding—to which guests are invited, and which, if it is thoroughly German, will last hours. As I have remarked before, it is not that so much is eaten, but the Teuton has the failing of never knowing when to bring a social gathering to an end. When he once starts enjoying himself he goes on until he drops with exhaustion. Thus we can leave Christmas Day at this point, knowing that the dinner is the chief event, which will last so long that everybody is incapacitated and incapable of any further effort.

On the second Christmas Day, as it is called, people flock in their best clothes to the Hof-theater where a "Festopera" is being given—usually "Lohengrin" or the "Meistersingers." The week that follows depends greatly on the weather and on individual tastes. Crowds pour up into the Black Forest, where, if it is a genuine Christmas, the snow is already thick and firm. Skiing, bob-sleighing, skating is then the order of the day, until the all-too-short holidays are at an end. I am convinced the English schoolboy would be speechless with indignation over these holidays! A fortnight is the extreme limit, and given only to boarding-schools whose inmates have long distances to go to reach their homes. The other educational institutions have rarely more than ten days, and sometimes less. From the 23rd of December to the 2nd of January is the usual thing. Hence by Sylvester Abend—New Year's Eve—the joys of freedom are nearly over, and there is a last grand festivity which serves the double purpose of welcoming the New Year and adding a crowning if farewell touch to the great ten days. As in France, the New Year is a more important time than with us. True, no presents are given except to the tradespeople, who receive their "New Year boxes," but cards are far more numerous than at Christmas, and as guests can be invited, it is possible to organise the festivity on bigger lines. Thus dances or dinner-parties help to wile away the hours to midnight. As the magic hour approaches, the Christmas tree, which still reigns in the drawing-room, is lighted for the last time, and the "Bleigieszen" is begun. This ceremony consists of boiling specially

prepared pieces of lead in a spoon over a candle; each guest takes his spoonful and throws it quickly into the basin of water which is held ready. According to the form which the lead takes so will his fortune be in the coming year. Sometimes the shapes are absolutely "impossible," though there is always some hopeful spirit in the company who professes to see a resemblance to some object or another. At any rate, the smallest resemblance is sufficient, and ships (which indicate a journey), or hearts (which have, of course, only one meaning), or some other equally significant shape is usually discerned. In the middle of this fortune-telling the clock strikes, a general cry of "Prosit Neu Jahr!" a general shaking of hands, and, if it can be afforded, champagne flows—in moderate quantities. Outside on the streets the cry of "Prosit Neu Jahr!" is echoed from corner to corner, one hears the crack of forbidden fireworks and the clash of bells. Slyvester Abend is at an end, and if one is sober-minded and eager to begin the New Year in the right spirit, one goes to bed—if not, well, one dances till the early hours are past, with the motto—

"Drink and be merry, for to-morrow we—work!"

Thus the fir-tree's reign is over; it is packed ignominiously in the garret or planted in the garden, and forgotten until it is too wretched an object to be tolerated longer. What does it matter? Next year there will be another and perhaps a finer one—at least we are sure to think it finer—and with it will come another Happy German Christmas. For the German Christmas is really happy—there is no

make-believe about it. It is the reality of what we call a "good old English Christmas"—a fable of times long past or never existent, whose only memento is to be found on the Christmas cards with their holly and mistletoe, and coaches driving through the snow, and brimming bumpers. I fear we are losing the Spirit of Christmas—Dickens' legacy. Perhaps we have frightened it away with our fine culture and superabundance of wealth and luxury—but it is not dead. It has taken up its home in the simple German hearts, whose warmth and sincerity have kept it alive, and will keep it alive, until the sad time comes when they too will forget to be simple.

CHAPTER VII

THE STUDENTS AND THE EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY

IT seems to me, on reviewing my German year, that the winter season is the one most full of events. Scene after scene crowds before my mind's eye, and no sooner is Christmas relegated to the past than the Emperor's Birthday, with its festivities, civil and military, arrives to break the monotony of peaceful days. There is no town or village, even here in South Germany, where the Imperial spirit is less deeply rooted, which does not celebrate the occasion with flags and bunting and festive clothes, and, above all, festive meals. The bourgeois element in the larger towns enjoys ponderous banquets and delivers ponderous if patriotic speches; the military parades in gala uniform, dances at the Kaiser Ball, and is generally very much *en evidence*; the Court attends the opera, where three cheers are called for His Imperial Majesty; and the students, here as everywhere, and as in everything, go about their celebrations in their own peculiar way. To understand their "way"—in fact, to understand them at all—one must not be satisfied with the superficial consideration which most foreigners bestow upon them. One must not be satisfied with a mere glance at the outside of things, or allow one's judgment to

be swayed by the unreliable literary efforts of the traveller who has neither taken the time or trouble to enter into the spirit of an institution which he does not hesitate to criticise and condemn. Let us, therefore, sweep out of our minds the picture of the German student which English people usually accept as genuine. The fat, ungainly, lazy, stupid beer-drinker no doubt exists, but he is no more typical than, I hope, were the drunken soldiers whom I had the humiliation of observing as they reeled over a certain English station. The typical German Corps student is in the first place a gentleman; he lives and acts as such, and though theoretically free, he is bound by self-made laws which are severer than any of those governing our own universities. I emphasise *Corps* student, because there are all sorts and conditions of students, and the difference in class can be as great as that between an engine-driver and a count's son. This is especially the case in a town like Karlsruhe, where there is a Polytechnicum or Hochschule for the study of practical sciences. In a university, as in Heidelberg, the differences are not so marked, though the elements are often very questionable, as is inevitable where the expenses are so low and social position of so little account. Practically any one can be a student, but not every one can be a Corps student.

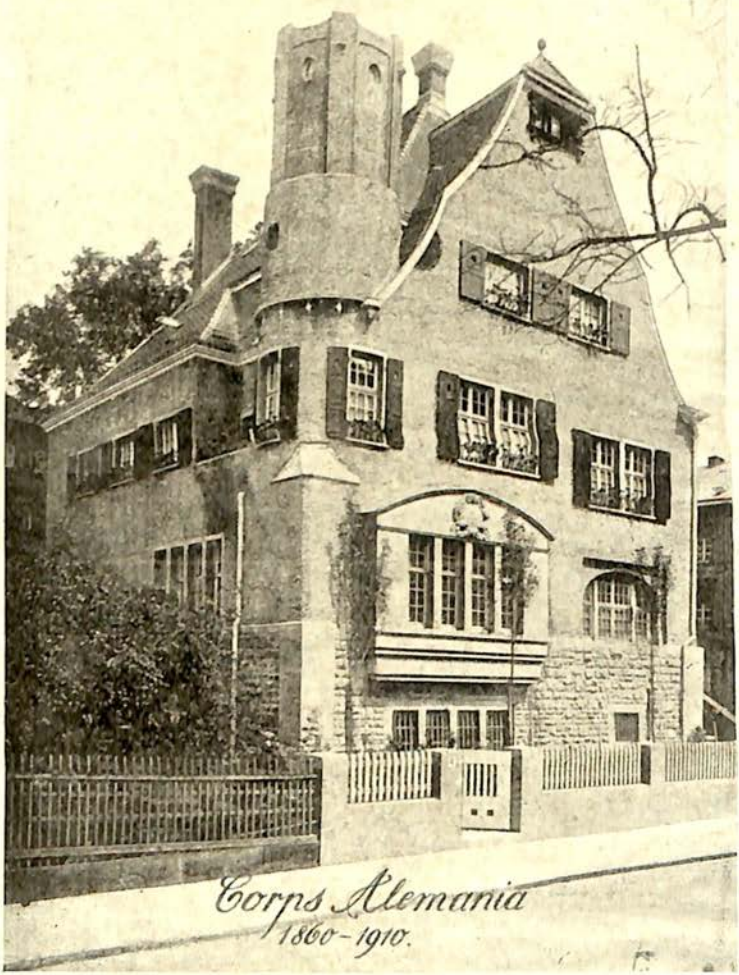
There is a legend that once upon a time four Germans were wrecked together on a desert island. The first thing they did before even attempting to dry themselves was to form a "Verein" (a society or union). After a few days they quarrelled, the Verein split up into two Vereins, which, so the legend

goes, are quarrelling with each other to this day. The story is very characteristic, and explains the whole student system, which is founded on the German's love of fighting, his sociability, and his intense dislike for independence in so far that it entails loneliness. Every German, rich or poor, belongs to a Verein. If he is musical he belongs to a Gesangsverein; if he is a soldier he is a member of the Kriegsverein; if a sportsman to Schutzenverein; and so on *ad nauseam*. The student is the example for the rule. He cannot live alone. He found the fact out generations ago when the Corps were first founded. This took place at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the students at the universities divided themselves according to their various nationalities into what was then called "Landmannshaften," wearing, after they had been officially recognised, distinguishing caps and colours. From these Landmannshaften have arisen the Corps, which fundamentally are the same, though the members are no longer recruited from the same State. Thus the Corps Bavaria may be compsoed entirely of north Germans, and here and there an entire foreigner is admitted into the circle. But the original laws exist almost unchanged, and they enclose the student in a self-governing world of his own.

It must not be imagined that a Corps is a kind of schoolboy clique. The Corps are under a regular government—the University Corps under what is called the Kösener Senioren Convent, the Polytechnicum Corps under the Weinheimer Senioren Convent. No new Corps can be founded without the consent of these Convents, no law changed or

inaugurated, and in the event of the death, marriage, or expulsion of a member they must immediately be informed. Thus the happy being who believes that this student's world is a place of liberty and licence, is as much deceived as the student himself when he triumphantly sings, "Frei ist der Bursch!" The government of the Corps is indeed so absolute, the laws so rigid and numerous, the punishment of offences so severe, that it is to be wondered at that young men who have just thrown off school discipline should willingly accept the new and often heavier yoke. This severe discipline, together with the considerable expenses connected with the Corps life, is the reason why the Corps are gradually diminishing, and the mass of the Wilden (the name given to the students who belong to neither Corps or Burschenshaften) increasing. Still, even to-day, a father, if his purse allows it, will always endeavour to get his son received into a good Corps. He knows very well that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of wasted time and money. In the first place, he has the assurance that his son can only mix with young fellows of his own position (a Corps is as particular as to the "Circles" in which its members associate as a careful mother with her daughters); he will be watched over by men older than himself, and kept from gambling and every other form of vice; he will be taught self-control, and in after-life he will have the support not only of those whom he knew as student but of all the older members of his Corps ("alte Herrn"), usually men of considerable wealth and position. Thus, for instance, a young architect or engineer, who through no fault of his own falls on evil days, need

only apply to an old Corps student who is at the head of some big business to be sure of getting an excellent berth, with the prospect of a rapid advancement. All these advantages are very real, and are fully worth the sacrifices of time, money, and independence which must be brought. The money is, without doubt, a serious item. To exist comfortably in a good Corps a student must have an allowance of at least £250 a year, and if possible more, and this sum is all the heavier because during the time that he is an active member work plays only a small part in his programme. Not that he leads an idle life, but the Corps makes so many demands upon his energies that only the most industrious can attend lectures or study privately. But the time is after all a short one. At the end of his fourth term the Corps student usually retires into private life as "inactive," and only appears at great ceremonies—very often he goes to another university to avoid the temptations of the old life. At any rate he becomes a worker, and in a sense which would make most English young men open their eyes. Considering how hard the German schoolboy has to work, and how hard the men must work in after life, the student cannot be grudged the short respite in which to enjoy his youth. And he does enjoy it—not in excesses as the heavy allowance would suggest. The £250–£300 is spent for a great part in assisting to bear the expenses of the Corps, whose members are often so limited in number that the share of the burden can be very serious. Most good Corps have their own houses, some even their own motors and carriages. The houses are sometimes extremely



A STUDENTS' CORPS-HOUSE.

fine buildings, built by subscription, in which the "alte Herrn" take a lion's share. From the outside they look like the private residences of the wealthy, but inside they are arranged to meet the special requirements of the Corps life. The furniture and fittings are handsome and tasteful. The entrance-hall—I am, of course, merely taking an example—is lined with dark oak, the walls covered with emblems and trophies from every part of the world; duelling sabres and the flags of the Corps and of its sister-Corps form the chief ornaments, which are never tawdry. There is a large "Kneipzimmer" (the room where the Kneipen or meetings are held), a library which a professor might envy, a casino for quiet evenings, and one or two odd rooms useful at festive times. In very few cases do the students make use of their houses as actual places of residence. Each has his private lodging, though they usually dine together at a specified restaurant. Only the most exclusive—and the practice is not looked upon with approval—keep their own cook and actually live in the Corps House. As a rule, the all-important Corpsdiener (servant) and his wife are left in charge, and see that everything is kept in perfect order.

Besides the expense of keeping up this establishment, there comes the carriages, excursions, tailors' bills, and above all the invitations which the Corps issues in the course of the year. This latter point is individual, but a well-represented Corps will usually give two or three balls during the year, besides small dances, Damen-Kneipen, etc. The balls are the great events of their social life, and perhaps it would be of some interest to describe one to which I was

invited shortly before Christmas. The invitation was for eight o'clock, but, as in all university matters, this includes an extra quarter of an hour, so that the guests are only expected to arrive at a quarter past eight. The three Chargierten (the heads of the Corps) received us in the entrance hall, glorious in immaculate evening dress, Corps ribbons, worn across the shirt-front, and the curious little Serevis caps, which remind me of the forage caps which some of our soldiers still wear, save that they are delicate works of art in blue silk and silver embroidery. Behind the Chargierten stands a crowd of beaming Füchse. I must hasten to explain at this point that the Füchse are not wild animals, as their name might suggest. The Corps is divided into two groups, the Burschen, or older students, who have won their privileges by a certain number of well-fought Mensur, and the Füsche, who are the new members, not yet having won their spurs, and bound by absolute obedience to their elders. Each Füchse has what is called a Leib-Bursche—a sort of Mentor and particular friend—whom he is allowed to choose out himself. Some popular students have so many Leib-Füchse to watch over that I should think they must find their nursemaid duties distinctly irksome. But let me return to the subject in hand. Having paid the Chargierten all the compliments which we could think of over the Christmas decorations, we were conducted upstairs to an improvised cloak-room. The efforts which had been made to achieve a "feminine" atmosphere were really quite pathetic. With the assistance and advice of the Corpsdiener's wife, our hosts had gathered together the most

wonderful assortment of hairpins, safety-pins, ordinary pins, needles, cottons, and hand-glasses I have ever seen. A haberdasher could have set up business on the stock; and, reassured by this provision for all possible accidents, we returned downstairs. The Corps was unusually strong—twenty students in all, and as other masculine guests had been invited, the rooms were by this time comfortably full. We were immediately conducted by our respective "Tischherrn" to the supper-table in the Kneipzimmer. The three Chargierten sat at the cross-table with the three most important chaperones, the others had their places assigned to them. Flowers were strewn everywhere, the string band played its hardest and loudest in the neighbouring room, and the supper began. There were three courses—rather slowly served by the unaccustomed Corpsdiener and his specially engaged satellites—so that, what with the speeches of welcome and other delays, it was past ten o'clock before we rose. We were then led upstairs and shown the glories of the library and casino, the horrors of the long duelling pistols and sabres. Whilst the tables were being cleared away downstairs coffee was handed round, and three students sat down and played a Beethoven trio for violin, 'cello, and piano! All three played excellently, and the others listened with critical interest. For any one with preconceived ideas of student rowdyism the sight of the solemn group must have been somewhat disconcerting. After this performance, which was warmly applauded, we proceeded downstairs again, and the dancing began. Of course the masculine element was vastly in the majority, so that there was not a

moment's rest. And the chaperones danced too—some of them! The more sober sat in the adjoining room, and were courteously entertained by the partnerless remainder. At about twleve o'clock a great sensation was caused by the arrival of Father Christmas—or an individual dressed up very like him—with a great bundle over his back. After the recital of a self-composed poem he distributed little bouquets of flowers to the masculine guests, and ribbons, with more or less witty mottos, to the ladies. The music once more struck up, the bouquets were offered in exchange for a waltz, until each lady present was well supplied. Afterwards came the Damanwahl, in which the feminine element asserted its independence, chose out the best dancers, and rewarded them with the much-coveted ribbons. This cotillon marked the high-tide of the evening, and being wise people we did not wait for the ebb. We departed, therefore, carrying with us the memory of a charming evening spent with hosts whose courtesy, kindliness, and *savoir faire* might well be set up as example for older people of genuine hospitality. When I read of the coarse, mannerless German student, I have only to recall the picture of those tall, well-built young men with their fresh-coloured faces—marred, it is true, with the Mensur scar—and their simple, unfailing courtesy, to be thoroughly amused.

In the summer this same Corps hires its own tennis-court, and invites those who danced with them in the winter. Picnic parties are arranged, at which the students still play the part of amiable hosts. As a return the various families invite the Corps to small house-dances, and as guests the students

are as agreeable as hosts. They still seem to think it is *their* business to entertain, and the agonies of sitting next a partner who answers in sulky monosyllables and *won't* dance are unknown. Equally unknown is all loudness or roughness. The ribbon which the Corps student wears is a guarantee that he is a gentleman, and that he will behave as such. The Corps make itself responsible for his whole conduct. Hence it is very careful as to whom it receives into its circle. The "Keilen"—that is to say, the recruiting of all sorts of students at all odd places and times—is only the methods of the lower and sometimes very inferior Burschenschaften or Verbindungen. The Corps only accept members who are recommended to them by "alte Herrn," and whose family and financial standing is unexceptionable, and it is as easy to "fly out" as it is difficult to get in. A single act of dishonour (lying or cheating), bad debts, or a sign of cowardice, and a student is at once deprived of his Corps ribbon and cast out into everlasting disgrace. It is a hard punishment. To fight unfairly, or to shrink back a step from an opponent's sword, is an offence past pardon, and accordingly the sinner is branded for life. Every Corps in Germany is given notice of his disgrace, and his own circle treats him as an outcast. An "ausgestossener Corps-student" is in the same position as an officer who has been dismissed from the Army with "schlichtem Abschied," and he can either disappear into the depths, go to America, or put a bullet through his brains—in his own circle he has made himself "impossible."

Thus the Corps student's life is not all roses. He

is constantly under the eye of a stern discipline. However long the Kneipen (meetings) last, he must neither show weariness nor exhaustion; however late he is up at night, at ten o'clock the next morning he must be at the Portal before the university in cap and colours; if he uses language or relates anecdotes which might not be repeated in a drawing-room he is heavily fined; if he upsets anything at table he is fined; if he breaks a glass he must supply the Corps with a dozen new ones; under no circumstances may he quarrel with or irritate a Corpsbruder; and so on into every detail of his life. As to the tremendous beer-drinking of which one hears so much, I have come to the conclusion that the whole custom is tremendously exaggerated—chiefly by the student himself. He takes a curious sort of pride in boasting about his prowess at the Kneipen; and in truth, if you count the glasses which he appears to consume at a sitting, it seems appalling. But—and this is the point—he rarely if ever drinks more than half of what is set before him. Two minutes after his glass has been given him by the Corpsdiener it is whisked away again and a fresh one brought, so that it can be calculated with fair correctness that half of the beer is really consumed and half of it wasted. Moreover, it must be remembered that German beer is extremely light, and he must indeed have a weak head who cannot stand the necessary quantities. For a certain quantity must be drunk. If one Corps student drinks to another the latter must drink in return, and as this formality is undergone at short intervals throughout a long sitting, the matter can become trying in the extreme.

It is in fact considered a joke to drink constantly to a poor unhardened young Fuchs, till the unfortunate youth is only kept upright by the stern eye of the Chargierten. It is a curious custom, this drinking, and though it is undoubtedly foolish, it is none the less a discipline of sorts. It requires rigid self-control, for, though the student may drink till heaven and earth are interchangeable, he may not show that he is drunk. But the latter stage is very rarely reached, and the whole drinking system is being modified from year to year. The duelling, as we call it, remains, however, as an unalterable institution. No student can belong to a Corps unless he is prepared to fight, and no student can win the coveted three-coloured ribbon of the Bursche until he has fought successfully at least three times. Here I must explain what the student means by "successfully." He does not mean that he has disabled his opponent and himself come off without damage—quite the contrary. He means that he has has a bad slash, and has borne it, both at the moment and in the still more painful afterwards, without flinching. Hence a brilliant fighter may fight three times and still remain a Fuchs. So long as he has not given visible proof of his courage and endurance, so long must he be content to occupy an inferior position among his brothers. His actual skill counts for comparatively nothing. This is the explanation for the pride which a student takes in his sometimes very grisly wounds. He sees in them, and he knows that others see in them, not the sign that he is a poor fighter, but that he has borne himself with honour.

The Mensur, as this form of fighting is called, is

not a duel. It is conducted without animosity between students of different Corps. (The Corps do not fight with the Burschenschaften.) The third Chargierter of the contending Corps choose out their representatives in perfect friendliness, and match them according to their size and experience. No Fuchs is allowed to fight until he has been taught, and accordingly every university has its Pauklehrer (teacher), who instruct the younger students to wield the sabres, and also to bear himself properly. Every morning the beginners must practise for a couple of hours on the Paukboden, as it is called, protected by masks and pads, and only when he has reached a certain degree of proficiency is he allowed to take his part in the "real thing." At the risk of placing myself in the position of a constant apologist for German customs, I feel that in justice I must make some effort to defend the practice which excites so much disgust and wonder among my own compatriots. The "real thing" is scarcely more violent, and perhaps less brutal, than a hard-fought game of Rugby football, and it requires infinitely more nerve and courage. It is true that the vital part of the student's body is padded and his eyes protected, but the whole of his face and head are exposed to the full force of his opponent's weapon. And the force is sometimes tremendous. There is no delicate French fencing. The "Schläger" (straight sword without point) is wielded above the head with an energy and rapidity which is bewildering, and neither of the opponents may flinch or jerk his head, or move back from his position. The two seconds on either side, armed with sabres, watch eagle-eyed for

the slighest infringement of the law, and woe to him who involuntarily shifts his position! If he is a young Fuchs he may be let off once with a few weeks' Verbannung, but if the practice continues he has proved himself unworthy of the Corps, and must go. The Verbannung, I must explain, is the hardest punishment which can be inflicted short of actual expulsion. It is a kind of "Coventry" into which a sinner may be sent for a few days or a few weeks according to the nature of his offence, and during that time he may neither speak to his comrades or wear the colours. He generally consoles himself with his much-neglected work. To return to the Mensur. Each "partie" lasts until one of the opponents has been "ausgestochen," that is to say, sufficiently badly cut to warrant the interference of the Paukarzt, who is always on the spot. The victim is marched off in the highest spirits to the adjoining room, where his wounds are immediately stitched, and not in the most gentle fashion either. Whilst he is being sewn up—sometimes the gashes require as many as sixteen stitches—his friends stand round, photograph him from the damaged side, and keep up a cheerful fire of comments, which the object must accept with unfailing good-humour. No matter how painful the operation may be, he must not flinch, and though they deny it with an easy shrug of the shoulders, it must often be a trying ordeal. After a Mensur a student belonging to a good Corps does not go into society until his wounds are presentable; he consoles himself by wandering about the streets with a black skull-cap and a bandaged face, though even this is sometimes forbidden.

I have already mentioned that the Corps do not fight with the Burschenshaften, and now comes the reason, which is quite German, a direct extension of the "Kastengeist" into a smaller sphere. The Corps consider themselves altogether above the Burschenshaften, and the feeling between the two parties is sometimes painfully strained. On the whole it must be admitted that the Corps are not far wrong in their self-estimation. There are, as a rule, only five Corps in a university, whose total numbers rarely amount to a hundred. These are the "elect"—young men of noble birth, as in the Borussia Corps in Bonn, or at any rate of good family. The Burschenschaften, with one or two respectable exceptions, are made up of all the elements which present themselves. Hence, though they have much the same laws as the Corps students, the tone among them is exactly that which one would expect to find in a very mixed society. They show themselves far more than the Corps students, and the stranger who sees a badly dressed, unpleasant-looking youth swaggering about in a coloured cap goes home with a sad tale of the Corps student, whom he has probably not seen at all. Besides the Burschenshaften there are the Wilden—students who belong to no Verbindung, and take no part in the fighting. On the whole they are looked upon with dislike and suspicion by the authorities—again not altogether without reason. Poles, Jews, doubtful specimens of all nations, mix with equally doubtful Germans, and the professors, who have usually been Corps students themselves, have no love for them. Of course there is always the class

of workers, retired Corps students, who are looked upon with respect, but they are not the Wilden, who, whilst professing to belong to no particular order, form a union amongst themselves whose motto is freedom—very often licence. The Wilden contain all the elements which afterwards drift—if they are not already there—into the arms of red-hot socialism and worse. The tendency towards socialism is alone sufficient to debar them from all intercourse with either the Burschenschaften or the Corps. The latter are essentially "Reichsgesinnten," that is to say, sworn foes to socialism and staunch adherers to the throne. Bismarck is their ideal German, and his portrait, with that of the present Emperor, hangs in the place of honour in every Corpshaus.

As regards the part which the Corps student plays in public life, everything depends on the university. In large cities, such as Berlin and Munich, they have next to no influence, but in Heidelberg and Freiburg they are the ruling powers. The town accepts their escapades with a smiling countenance, and even the policeman treats them with a not very affectionate respect. Certainly the town has all reason to love the wearers of the coloured caps, for without them the shops might just as well put up their shutters. The student is reckless with his "dedication presents," his carriages, his tailor's and smoking bills, and as the tradesman's pet trick is to refuse cash payment, and to send in enormous accounts long after the student has forgotten what he really did and did not buy, the poor youth—or rather his poor father—is miserably swindled. As

to the policeman, he plays his rôle in fear and trembling. He knows that for every severity on his part the punishment is sure and swift. Thus there was once a misguided sergeant who, having caught some young Fuchse at their favourite amusement of turning out the street lamps, marched them off to the Carcer (university prison), and saw to it that they were rewarded with a few days' confinement. Some weeks later the same sergeant, wandering through the streets at midnight, saw a sight which delighted his venomous heart—students crawling stealthily down the street bearing on their shoulders a suspicious-looking ladder.

"Ha!" thought the Law, "another sign-board to be stolen! This is a chance for glory!" and followed on tip-toe. His supposition proved all too correct. Outside a shop where a large sign-board announced the wares of a certain tailor a halt was made. After much peering round and mysterious whisperings, the ladder was hoisted and the theft committed. "Caught—red-handed!" cried the triumphant sergeant, pouncing upon his victims. Fearful consternation ensued. The more timid fell on their knees and implored him to "let them off this once," touching references were made to the broken mother-hearts and disgraced fathers; but the Law was obdurate, and behold the whole crest-fallen, lamenting crowd was marched solemnly off to the Wache. There the superintendent began his part. Delighted to have so many victims at one haul, he made the formalities as long and painful as he could. Long lists with names and addresses mere made out, impertinent questions asked, and

ong speeches held, until after some two weary hours had passed the eldest student meekly produced a bill.

"But is it the law that one may not remove one's own property, dear Herr Polizist?" he asked with humble interest.

"What the devil do you mean?"

"You see—the sign-board happens to be ours——"

"Yours?"

"We bought it this morning, if you please. Here is the receipt."

A veil may be drawn over the subsequent explosion, and the war dance of triumph which was executed outside the Wache and all the way home, to the chagrin of the peacefully sleeping Heidelberger citizens. Such scenes are too common, and I have only ventured to quote the historic prank because it is typical of student pranks in general. Sometimes they are witty and sometimes they are not, but on the whole they are as harmless as the one I have described.

Like every member of the better class society, the Corps student is intensely exclusive. Except on certain fixed occasions he does not even associate with members of other corps, and he only enters into society either with his Corps brothers or with their sanction. Thus it is very rare to see a student anywhere alone; and if he begins to mix in a circle not approved of by the rest of his Corps, he is very quickly brought to the right-about. A student whom I know is a keen sportsman, but his Corps has forbidden him to join the hockey and tennis clubs in the town, firstly, because there are Wilden among the members,

and secondly, because it takes up too much of his time. A Corps student, therefore, must be prepared to give up everything from the moment he wears the colours, and to surrender his will entirely into the hands of the majority. This system no doubt tends to narrowness and one-sidedness, but the extreme effects are rubbed off as soon as the student leaves the university behind him, and it belongs to the German idea of discipline, which is the leading idea in every phase of life. Moreover, like all German exclusiveness, it has its reasons and its advantages. The reason is not far to seek. It must be remembered that the Corps is responsible for the behaviour of each one of its members, and that should one of them bring discredit on himself the whole Corps may be abolished, or at any rate suspended for any number of terms. Hence it behoves the Chargierten to keep stern watch over the younger members. And the advantage is, as I have already remarked, that a young man cannot get into bad society or run wild. The latter dangers are greater in a German than in an English university, because the student is under no direct control, and is free to study, "bummel," or go to the bad very much as he likes. The Corps acts as a sort of expensive but reliable brake, and the young man who believes that he is enjoying the wildest freedom is really under the strictest possible control. He does not realise the fact, and so does not mind it, and in after days he looks back upon his Corps life as to the happiest, freest time, when he enjoyed himself most, worked least, and made his best and most enduring friendships.

All this has been a lengthy digression from the starting-point, but the German student-life is a complicated subject, which I do not pretend to have done more than touched on. Nevertheless, I trust I have explained sufficient to introduce the reader into the midst of a Kaiser-Kommers—the student's celebration of the Emperor's birthday—with the feeling that it will not be entirely incomprehensible to him. A Kommers, it must be explained, is a formal meeting of all the Corps, and sometimes of the Burschenshaften, to celebrate some special national event. The Kaiser-Kommers is the most important of these, and takes place some days before the 27th of January in one or other of the large town halls. As the Corps and the Burschenshaften are nearly always on bad terms, it is very rare that the peace angels succeed in bringing them together, and each party usually holds its Kommers alone. Though the scene suffers thereby in size and colour, it is on the whole more attractive and in every way more select. Ladies are invited as admirers, and are throned at long tables on a raised platform, from whence they have a wide view over the whole scene. At the far end of the hall each Corps has built up its emblems of flags, shields, and armorial bearings with the presiding Corps of the year in the centre. Beneath these gay trappings is the guest-table, with the invited professors, town officials, and higher officers. The first Chargierter of the presiding Corps occupies the great oak-chair in the centre, and commands the ceremonies. The tables of the Corps are arranged down the centre of the hall; each Corps has its own table, with the Chargierter at the head,

and is supplemented by "alte Herrn" and special guests, who are received at the entrance and conducted to their places amidst the salutations of the whole assembly—a somewhat embarrassing proceeding, by the way. The scene is a brilliant one, especially for the modern eye, which is accustomed only to drab and dreary colours in the masculine world. The well-set-up figures in the picturesque Vix—or uniform—form a picture which the stranger does not easily forget. Each Corps has its own Kneip-Jacke, a sort of short, braided military coat in the Corps colour, in this case either pale blue cornflower, dark blue, green, or black—the Serevis to match, white leather trousers, and high black boots over the knee. The Chargierter carry swords with sashes, with the Corps colour over the shoulder, and the Burschenschaften — when they are present — wear long ostrich plumes in their caps after the fashion of an earlier age. Indeed, the whole scene seems to belong to another and more chivalrous century.

Meanwhile a string band performs selections out of the operas until the presiding Chargierter rises, and, having struck the table three times with his drawn sword, commands "Silentium!" He then announces that a "Salamander" is to be "rubbed" in honour of his Imperial Majesty. This performance is a curious one. The whole assembly rises, the Chargierter commands "Eins!" Each takes his glass of beer and drinks it to the dregs. "Zwei!" The glasses are lowered. "Eins, zwei, drei!" The glasses are rattled sharply on the table, producing a sound like muffled thunder—at "drei!" they are

STUDENTS IN FULL UNIFORM.

brought down with a single abrupt crash. Such is the student's method of drinking a health—the famous Salamander. After this the singing begins. Drinking, fighting, and singing—these three occupations play a great part in the student's life, and the latter item by no means the least. The German student sings well and lustily, and his songs are worth singing. They are fresh, vigorous, and melodious without being trivial. The greatest German poets and composers have helped to enrich the store, and consequently it is a real pleasure to listen, and even to join in, as every guest is expected to do. During the singing the first Chargierter of each Corps remains standing, as also during the speeches which follow. The first is to the Emperor, held by the presiding Chargierter, after which the national anthem is sung, and a second Salamander "rubbed." Speeches for the Grand Duke, the professors, the guests, and last—but not least, and by far the most amusing—for the ladies, are held by the different Chargierten, and each is concluded by the complimentary Salamander, to which, fortunately, the ladies are not expected to respond. When one considers that the speech-holders are little more than boys, and that they have an audience of professors, generals, and sometimes of the Grand Duke himself, the speeches are remarkably good, and are always warmly patriotic. "Patriotism" is indeed the keynote of the whole proceedings. The songs and speeches breathe the same passionate attachment to Kaiser and Vaterland, and one feels that one is in touch with a great and vigorous national force in embryo. In between the songs and speeches the ladies are visited and pre-

sented with flowers from the Corps by which they are invited, and then at twelve o'clock the ceremony begins which is to mark the close of the official part of the evening. This is the "Landesvater." During the singing of a certain song, to which the name "Landesvater" is given, the two youngest students of each corps, at opposite sides of the table, drink to each other standing; a Chargierter takes up his place behind each on the empty chair, and gives his charge his Schläger or sword. These are first clashed together in time to the music and then crossed, whilst between the points the Chargierter on the one side gives his hand to the student on the other. At the end of the last verse—"Halten will ich stets auf Ehre"—each student takes his cap and pierces it on to his sword. The two particular verses are then begun again, and the Chargierten move on to the next couple, until all the caps of the Corps are collected on to the sword. Those who have performed their part of the ceremony link arms, so that at the end the whole Corps is thus joined together round the table. This ends the official part of the evening. Afterwards, when the guests have gone, the end of the song is sung, and the caps returned to their respective owners. All forms and ceremonies are then over; the Corps mingle together, and singing, drinking, and smoking occupy the hours until—no one knows when except perhaps the milkman!

I have ventured to give the Landesvater with a very rough translation, because, in the original at least, it expresses the German spirit, German patriotism, and the German love of symbolism. The melody

is simple and impressive, as indeed is the whole ceremony, unlikely though it may sound. It may not appeal to our English taste, any more than the student-life itself, but not on that account have we the right to ignore what is undoubtedly the source, the very root of all. "For Emperor, Fatherland and honour!" is the rallying cry of the German student, and it is the guiding principle which he carries with him into his after-life. No doubt he is very young, very foolish, very tenacious of his ancient, antiquated customs, but he has retained the high purpose of which the customs are but the rough expression, and has brightened it with that poetry and idealism which is the German's heritage.

THE LANDESVATER.

1.

Alles schweige! Jeder neige ernsten Tönen nun sein Ohr! Hört, ich sing das Lied der Lieder! hört es, meine deutchen Brüder! hall es, hall es wieder, froher Chor!

2.

Deutchlands Söhne, laut ertöne euer Vaterlandsgesang! Vaterland! du Land des Ruhmes, weih zud! deines Heiligtumes, Hütern, uns und unser Schwert!

3.

Hab und Leben dir zugeben, sind wir allesamt bereit, sterben gern zu jeder Stunde, achten nicht der Todeswunde, wenn das Vaterland gebeut.

1.

Silence all! Let each atune his ear to solemn tones! Listen, I sing the song of songs! Hear it, my German brothers! Echo it, echo it again, happy choir!

2.

Germany's sons, loud rings your Fatherland's song! Fatherland! the land of glory, consecrate to your sacred protection us and these our swords!

3.

Life and possessions are we all ready to give thee, glad to die at any hour, despising the death-wound when the Fatherland commands.

4.

Wer's nicht fühlet, selbst nicht zielet stets nach deutcher Männer Wert, soll nicht unsern Bundentehren, nicht bei diesem Degen schwören, nicht entweihen das deutche Schwert.

4.

He who does not feel this, he who strives not always to attain the worth of German men, shall not dishonour our union, shall not swear by this weapon, shall not desecrate the German sword.

5.

Lied der Lieder, hall es wieder: grosz und deutch sei unser Mut! Seht hier den geweihten Degen, tut, wir braven Burschen pflegen, und durchbohrt den freien Hut!

5.

Song of songs, echo it again, great and German be our courage! See here, the consecrated weapon; do, as is the custom of brave fellows, and pierce through the cap of freedom!

6.

Seht ihn blinken in der Linken, diesen Scläger, nie entweiht! Ich durchbohr den Hut und schwöre, halten will ich stets auf Ehre, stets ein braver Bursche sein.

6.

See it flashing in the left hand—the sword never desecrated! I pierce the cap and swear that I will ever hold to honour, ever be a true fellow (Bursche).

7.

Nimm den Becher, wackrer Zecher, vaterländschen Trankes voll! Nimm den Schläger in die Linke, bohrihn durch den Hut und trinke auf des Vaterlandes Wohl!

7.

Bold drinker, take the cup, brimming with the Fatherland's toast! Take the sword in the left hand, pierce the cap, and drink to the glory of the Fatherland!

Here follows the second part of the ceremony, when the caps are given back to certain verses of the song, which conclude thus—

10.

Auf ihr Festgenossen, achtet unsre Sitte, heilig, schön! Ganz mit Herz und Seele trachtet, stets als Männer zu bestehen. Froh zum Fest ihr trauten brüder, jeder sei der Väter wert! Keiner taste je ans Schwert der nicht edel ist und bieder

10.

Thus, companions, respect our custom, holy, beautiful! With heart and soul strive to live as men. Joyous in the feast, let each be worthy of his fathers, let no one touch the sword who is not noble and true.

11.

Ruhe von der Burschenfeier, blanker Weihedegen, nun! Jeder trachte, wackrer Freier um das Vaterland zu sein! Jedeom Heil, der sich bemühte ganz zu sein der Väter wert; keiner taste je ans Schwert, der nicht edel ist und bieder.

11.

Shining weapon, rest now from this our ceremony! Let each endeavour to be the brave defender of the Fatherland! Hail to him who strives to be worthy of his race; and let no one touch the sword who is not noble and true.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DUEL

STUDENT life and an incident—or rather tragedy—which was recently related to me leads me naturally to the subject of duelling in Germany. Briefly the tragedy—which is not of recent date, and, indeed, belongs to all ages—is as follows: Two officers, nicknamed Castor and Pollux on account of their unusually close and long friendship, were stationed together in some desolate frontier garrison. Castor married. His wife, a young and pretty woman, came, as a matter of course, to share her husband's dreary and monotonous existence, and—equally as a matter of course—was bored to extinction. Now she was musical, and it so happened that Pollux was also musical, and, as Hausfreund, it was only natural that he should constantly come to the house to play duets with his friend's wife. As time went on, ugly whispers were heard—how much truth there was in them no one knows—and the day came when the Colonel called Castor to him and warned him that the honour of the regiment demanded that the scandal should be put an end to. Castor put an end to it. No doubt he discovered enough to justify the extreme course, but, be it as it may, he

challenged his life-long friend the same night, and the next morning was shot dead by him. It seemed indeed as though the "Gottesgericht" had once more failed to pick out the real culprit, but indeed Castor wished for no other fate. He had lost his friend, his wife, his honour, and consequently his career, and death was the one possible solution. Pollux was sentenced to two years' fortress, and, after the expiration of his sentence, left the army and married his dead friend's wife. All this is long ago, but I am told that though from that hour fortune seemed to smile on him, he became a wretched and broken man. Such is the tragedy. It is in no way new, but it is a typical instance of the causes which lead to a duel in Germany. It is typical also as regards the consequences which are very often fatal. Mark Twain's delightful description of a French duel is, no doubt, a truthful caricature, but it is significant that even the Amercian's unlimited powers of seeing "the funny side of things" has not led him to touch lightly on the German duel. It is, indeed, not a matter for jesting; and whether you approve or disapprove, you are at least impressed, awed even, by the stern code which commands one man to deliberately demand life for an injury done. The German is not given to treating the duel, or anything else for that matter, with a light or frivolous hand. I cannot imagine two heated opponents —after much advertisement and ceremonial— crossing dainty foils, and, after the first scratch, falling into each other's arms in floods of conciliatory tears. It is a too un-German tableau to be thinkable. The German goes out in the early morning,

unheard and unseen save by those immediately concerned, and exchanges shots with his enemy at a given number of paces until one or other is *hors de combat*—perhaps dead. Sometimes the conditions may be less severe, the outcome less tragic—sometimes, but not often. For the German dúel is a rarity even among students, who of all are the most given to the practice, and when it actually comes to pass, it means that the cause has been serious, requiring severe measures.

I repeat, the duel is a rarity, not because people are beginning to disapprove of the system, but because it is not in the German nature to trifle, least of all in the matter of his honour. He does not want to lay himself open to the charge of being ridiculous, and, since everything which is carried to extremes is bound in the course of time to degenerate into the absurd, as in the case of the French duel, he takes care that the "Zweikampf" shall be a last solemn measure resorted to when no other course is possible. No doubt, from the English point of view, there is always another course possible. Had the tragedy which I have just related taken place in England, Castor would have simply sought his vengeance in the murky atmosphere of the Divorce Court, and there would have been an end of the matter. But the German sees that matter from another standpoint. His honour is his fetish, the foundations on which his whole life is built, and a man who had gone through Castor's experience would argue that he had not only lost his domestic happiness, but that his highest earthly treasure had been brutally trodden under foot, his good name for ever sullied.

He would argue that a Court of Justice does not and cannot repair this injury, and that to drag his name through the mud of publicity is only to add disgrace to disgrace. Hence he stands in contemptuous wonder before the picture of the Englishman who allows the holiest and ugliest details of his private life to be made the food for every daily rag, and who will even accept money in return for the injury done him. For him such a course would be an impossibility, a horrible absurdity, which would damn him for ever in the eyes of the world as a coward, a man without sufficient personal courage to protect his honour, or—worse still—without sufficient sense of honour to make the protection a necessity. I once had a long discussion on the subject with a German gentleman, and tried to make our standpoint clear to him, but he had always the same answer—

"The man who takes money for his honour has never had any honour. He is a merchant who trades with his name and reputation."

It is not my intention to discuss the ethical rights and wrongs of the case, but it must be admitted that in certain circumstances justice is helpless to make reparation. If it be said that in the duel it is more often than not the chief culprit who gets off unpunished, I can only retort that the same thing usually happens in the courts. Imagine Castor in the witness-box giving evidence against his wife and dearest friend, making a public scandal of all that was best and most sacred in his life, and accepting money as a consolation! If innocency and blamelessness testify to a higher refinement and sensitiveness, who is most likely to feel the most—

Castor, the man of honour, or Pollux, who has already plunged into deceit and disloyalty? Moreover—and this applies especially to Germany—the mud thrown in a Court of Justice is enough to make the man with the most spotless reputation shrink from seeking protection in that quarter. I need only to think of a certain great trial here, when a young and absolutely innocent girl was accused—without the shadow of evidence—of the murder of her mother. It was simply a detestable trick played by the defenders of the real culprit, but that girl's life was made a hell on earth for something like two years. She was pursued by the vilest insinuations, insults, and taunts. The mob was incited against her; every detail of her life, her letters, her childhood, her clothes—down to the fact that she wore silk petticoats!—was made the subject of the most revolting discussions in open court, and in the daily papers. She was of good family, gently nurtured, highly educated; she had lost her mother under the most terrible circumstances, and that these unchecked and purposeless calumnies, and the constant strain of their refutation, did not turn her brain, has been my constant wonder. For two years she fought her battle with truly heroic tenacity, and was at last grudgingly proclaimed victor over her calumniators. But what was their slight, almost nominal, punishment compared to her sufferings? An editor was fined a few hundred marks—he had made thousands over the case—and her life was ruined. Not "all the perfumes of Arabia" could wash her name clean from the wanton scandal with which it had been sullied, and to the

end of her days no doubt the spiteful people of the world will nudge each other when they see her. "That is—— Do you remember the great trial? They said she murdered her mother; etc., etc. Where there is smoke there is always fire, etc., etc." And all this without the faintest scrap of justification, except that given by notorious liars and perjurers! It is not to be wondered, therefore, that a gentleman, having been outrageously insulted or injured, hesitates to drag his case into a German court, where spite, vindictiveness, and calumny are allowed to flourish without hindrance. It is not to be wondered at that he prefers to take his vengeance in his own hands. And, moreover, it is a fact that duelling prevents scandal, or, at least, prevents it from spreading. People keep tighter reins on their gossiping propensities when they know that the object of their gossip is ready to demand life as an atonement. Even if the atonement be demanded, and the victim of the calumny himself fall, the scandal is at an end—death holds up a warning hand before which the most confirmed scandal-monger shrinks back appalled. Under such circumstances the duel can only be resorted to as an extreme measure, when the insulted feels that death is preferable to life under the shadow of the injury which has been done him, and a duel over trifles is almost unknown, and universally condemned. The student is the worst culprit in this respect; his sense of honour is deliberately strained to a state of sensitiveness which makes the slightest lack of civility a cause of quarrel. Some time ago a student of one Corps neglected to salute a student of another

Corps. A duel was the result, and cost one of the combatants his life. It was an accident—the survivor had only intended to disable his opponent; but public opinion was so strong that both Corps were suspended, and the seconds punished. Had the cause of the duel been serious, no one would have been punished, for the German Civil Law, to all intents and purposes, recognises—in certain cases—the duel as an inevitable evil. Nominal punishments are affixed, ranging from six months to three years' "arrest," but the six months can be given in a fatal case; and if the cause of the duel be proved sufficiently serious, and the proceedings throughout have been correct, the survivor will probably receive his pardon from the Emperor or the ruler of the State. In any case the "arrest" has no sort of stigma attached to it—rather the contrary—and it must be added that abuse of this virtual permission is rare. The student who has had his over-sensitive honour wounded usually resorts to a "Sabel-Mensur"—a more dangerous form of the ordinary Mensur, which, however, has rarely a serious outcome. He cannot even enter into such a conflict without the approval of the Ehrengericht—the Court of Honour—formed of impartial fellow-students, who consider if the cause justifies the extreme measure, and arranges that the conditions shall be in proportion to the seriousness of the offence. They are young men, and it sometimes happens that their decisions are not of the wisest, but, on the whole, they recognise the importance of their mission, and endeavour to modify the conditions if, according to their ideas, the duel prove inevitable. The tragic and foolish

case which I have just mentioned happened some years ago, and has found no repetition as far as I know. Without doubt many duels are hushed up, and the causes—especially when they are serious—limited to the knowledge of those immediately concerned; but a fatal duel cannot be passed over unchronicled, and in six years I have only heard of one case, and that was in another part of Germany. When it is remembered that the German sense of honour is extremely high-pitched, and that all men of the upper classes regard the duel as the one and only resource for a gentleman who has been insulted, it must be admitted that the percentage is very low. Possibly the reason is that, where everybody lives in glass houses, everybody is very careful not to throw stones, and it is certainly true that German men are exceptionally polite to each other.

The civilian duel is the rarest duel of all. The civilian has only his personal honour to protect, whereas the officer is guardian not only of his own but of his professional honour (Standesehre), and the latter is the most sensitive of all. The officer, in fact, is not to be considered as a private individual, but as the member of a great body—one is almost tempted to say a sacred body, since the German considers the protection of King and Fatherland a sacred duty. Hence an officer who is insulted is twice insulted, and if he does not immediately resort to arms he is considered unworthy of his post, and is dismissed the army.

"I expect," stands in the Emperor's proclamation of 1872, "from the whole officers' Corps of my army that as in the past, so in the future, Honour

shall be its highest treasure, to keep it pure and spotless the highest duty of the individual and of the whole body."

This "Honour" entails something more than our idea of honour. It requires not only that a man should abstain from every unworthy action, but that he should represent outwardly in his person, in his words and actions, a high ideal which he must defend with his life from insult, from ridicule, from humiliation. This does not mean that a young lieutenant has the right to challenge his colonel when the latter has the audacity to find fault with him. These sort of insults must be stoically swallowed, and all sensitiveness kept out of sight where duty is concerned. Indeed, if a superior officer accepts a challenge from a subordinate, it costs both him and the challenger "the collar," as the saying goes—in other words, both will be requested to send in their commissions. It is only outside the actual military service, in the private life of the officer, as it were, that the duel plays a part. Then anybody who attacks by word or deed a member of the officers' Corps is guilty of an indirect *lèse Majesté*, and unless an apology is immediately forthcoming, the punishment is swift and sure. This is known; the German accepts the situation. He treats the officer with careful respect and courtesy, and the officer in turn treats him with a cautious formality. It follows as a natural result that amongst the officers themselves all "ragging," chaff out of moderation, rough manners, a "letting-oneself-go," is almost unknown. Such things can but lead to the most disastrous results, and it is the

business of every comrade to stop a quarrel or a joke before it reaches a point where there is no turning back. For it is a mistake to imagine that duelling is in any way encouraged or looked upon with favour. It is looked upon in the light of a dangerous but sometimes unavoidable operation in a case which has gone too far to be cured by any other means. An officer who has fought in a duel has cast a serious shadow over his own career; it is considered a sign of tactlessness, lack of self-control, and so on, faults which obviously unfit him for a high post. If he has fought without just cause, or forced a comrade into a quarrel with deliberate intent, he is summarily dismissed the army. On the other hand, he may not refuse to fight. If he does so the same punishment awaits him. The case is put clearly by the Emperor himself in the course of the proclamation which I have already quoted:—

"The Court of Honour shall only proceed against officers on account of a duel when one or other of the combatants has, either as regards the cause or the conduct of the quarrel, sinned against the Standesehre. This must happen in the possible case of an officer criminally and without any cause insulting a comrade. For I will as little tolerate in my army an officer who is capable of wickedly injuring a comrade's honour, as I will tolerate an officer who does not know how to defend his honour."

On another occasion, I believe, he declared that he would punish an officer who fought in a duel, but that he would dismiss an officer who refused a challenge.

Thus it is clear that the duel is a serious matter from whatever point it is considered, and the prospect of a ruined career is sufficient to prevent the young hot-heads from allowing their passions to get the better of them. Moreover, there is always the Court of Honour—composed of specially elected officers from the regiment—which, if it has not actually the power to prevent a duel, must always be informed, and in correct cases decide whether there is sufficient cause, and what the conditions of the duel should be. A duel must be fought within twenty-four hours of the challenge, and all the arrangements, the informing of the Court, the endeavours to bring about a reconciliation, and so on, is given into the hands of the two seconds. Pistols are nearly always used, though sabres are allowed, and the distance and conditions, either a certain number of shots, or continued firing until one or both of the combatants are *hors de combat,* depend entirely on the severity of the insult. But, as I have said, it rarely happens that trifles bring about such disasters. There is nearly always some tactful comrade at hand to prevent matters from reaching danger point, and thus when a duel actually takes place, the conditions are usually serious. The so-called American duel is looked upon as "unritterlich" (unchivalrous), and is never practised.

So much for the duel as it exists in the German Army. It may be decreasing, but I do not believe that it will ever cease to be a national institution in certain classes of society, so long as it has the support of the Emperor. Only the other day an

anxious member of the Reichstag brought in an appeal that duelling in the Army might be altogether suppressed. The Government retorted that for men of honour the duel was a necessity, and that it had no intention of interfering.

In conclusion, I must mention the most difficult and the most disastrous form of duelling—that between the officer and the civilian. Between one officer and another the matter is simple enough. Both men are governed by the same code; but the civilian makes his own laws, and should he be of democratic tendencies, he may refuse to fight altogether. Or, what is worse from the officer's point of view, he may prove not "satisfactionsfähig" (not in a social position in equality with the challenger). If an officer has been publicly insulted by a civilian who will not accept his challenge, or who is beneath him socially, little remains for him but to send in his commission—he has allowed the uniform to be insulted, and has been unable to demand satisfaction. Should he actually receive a blow, he has no option but to draw his sword, and it is expressly stated that he must not draw it merely to threaten or intimidate. Count von Schwerin wrote as follows on the subject:—

"Without any fault of his it can happen that an officer is insulted (a blow is meant in this instance) by a man from whom he cannot demand satisfaction. In such a case, where the attack is usually unexpected and treacherous, it is necessary to act with the greatest determination; then the officer must make use of his weapon. An officer who sees himself forced, either after an attack or before a threaten-

ing attack, to draw his sword must never do so simply to frighten."

This law has led to more than one tragedy, though it must be said to the credit of the German lower classes, and to the self-control of the officers themselves, that they are very rare. A case of this description actually occured in Karlsruhe some time ago. An officer was seated with friends in a rather second-class café, when a man of inferior social position, passing behind his chair, deliberately tried to tip it up and throw the officer to the ground. The officer thought it wiser to treat the matter as an accident, and went on talking. The man passed a second time, acting in the same manner. The officer, feeling that the incident had been witnessed by every one in the café, and that he was the object of general interest, rose to his feet and demanded an explanation. The man answered insolently, and the officer, seeing with whom he had to deal, and infuriated by the disastrous tangle in which he had innocently become involved, hastily left the café, intending to report the matter to head-quarters. As ill-luck would have it, his opponent had meanwhile been thrust out of a side door by the indignant proprietor of the café, and the two men came suddenly face to face at the corner. Whether the civilian meant to attack or not is uncertain. At any rate the officer saw in this reappearance a further intention to insult him, and, drawing his sword, ran his aggressor through the body. According to the laws which govern his profession, he acted in the only way possible, but he was none the less severely punished, and afterwards sent out to

East Africa to a certain death, not because he had killed the civilian, but because he had mixed in society which was not fitting for a man wearing the King's uniform, and had allowed the quarrel to reach a stage where he could not have acted otherwise.

It can be imagined that under these conditions the officer in uniform is chary of all civilian society which is in the least "mixed," and is never to be seen in any but first-class restaurants and places of amusement. All this has helped to close him in a narrow, exclusive circle, cutting him off from all other classes, and making him, as I shall attempt to describe him in the next chapter, a man apart.

CHAPTER IX

THE COAT OF MANY COLOURS

THERE are four regiments stationed in Karlsruhe, two Artillery, one Dragoon, and one Grenadier, beside what is called a Telegraphabteilung, and a battalion of Army Service Corps, forming in all a force of about five thousand men and two hundred officers. You would expect, therefore, to find the principal street bright with uniforms, and to breathe a highly military atmosphere. As a matter of fact you would scarcely notice that you were in a garrison town at all, unless you were led to the gates of the barracks; and you can wander up and down the Kaiser Strasse for hours at the busiest time of the day, and perhaps meet a couple of officers and a handful of privates all on business bound. This fact is all the more remarkable because you meet every one on the Kaiser Strasse; it is a sort of public at-home, so that if you particularly want to see a friend without going to the bother of calling, you need only parade the street at a certain hour of the day to attain your purpose. But the officer is a *rara avis* among the Bummelers. You can have a dozen acquaintances in a regiment and never meet a single one of them out-of-doors, except perhaps on the way to the opera in the evening. Where,

then, are these two hundred wearers of the "Bunten Rock," and what is their life that they cannot afford the time to take their sociable stroll like other mortals? Such was the question I once asked a young lieutenant at a dance. He was the picture of physical weariness, and though he danced and talked with heroic tenacity, one could see that he was ready to sink into the nearest chair and sleep the sleep of the dead. He looked at me reproachfully.

"What I do all day?" he said. "Would you really like to know?"

I assured him that it would interest me extremely, and he proceeded with the day's programme.

"I get up at half-past six in the morning. At half-past seven I am all ready for the march with the troops, with whom I exercise until half-past ten. At eleven I have my riding lessons, which last until half-past twelve. From one o'clock to three is pause. At three o'clock I instruct the under-officers in history and strategy. At five o'clock I have my first solid meal, and can have my bath and change my uniform. From six to seven I hold a lecture to the recruits. After that I can go to the opera, unless I am too tired, or invited or commanded to some military function, in which case I cannot reckon on more than four or five hours' sleep. Later on I am going in for the staff examination, and then I don't see how I am going to get to bed at all."

He said all this with a cheerfulness which was almost pathetic, taken in connection with his boyish

face, and he then threw off his weariness to relate to me all the details of his soldier's life, his love for his work, his interest in his recruits, his hopes for the future. Gradually, as I listened to him, I forgot his extreme youth. Beneath the enthusiasm there was already the deeper note of a solemn responsibility, the knowledge that the uniform he wore was the outward symbol of a sacred trust. I met him again two or three years later, when the novelty of his life had worn off, and although he could not have been more than twenty-two, all his boyishness was gone, all the overflow of enthusiasm. The enthusiasm was still there, but it had become the stern, controlled enthusiasm of a fully developed man, who has already weathered the troubles, disappointments, and trials of a strenuous career. It was impossible to imagine him indulging in some mad youthful prank or running into any form of excess. His Duty—the great fetish of the German soldier—demanded his mind and body and soul. No doubt he was an extreme case, the type of ambition which is always feverish to be getting on; and no doubt there are many of his comrades who are content merely to do what they must and take the pleasures that offer themselves, but it would not be too much to say that the lazy good-for-nothing does not and cannot exist in the German Army—or if he exists, it is only for a short breathing space, until the inevitable time comes when the eyes of the powers-that-be pass critically over his career, and he is weeded out with the most merciless promptitude. It does not often happen that this weeding process is necessary, for the simple reason

that before a young man is allowed to don his lieutenant's epaulettes he has already been through a severe test as regards his mental and moral standards. The tests are threefold. Either he has been brought up in the Cadettenschule—the most economical way—from whence he passes into the army as ensign, or he is prepared in the Gymnasium, and must serve first as a common soldier, working his way up to the rank of lieutenant, or he may enter through the "back door," as it is called. The latter possibility comes into consideration in the case of an Einjähriger (an ordinary civilian serving his year with the colours), who, having shown a strong liking and talent for the military profession, and having won the favour of his superiors, is invited to remain. This does not often happen, however. The first two entrances are the most usual, though it does not by any means follow that they are open to everybody. An officer who had been commanded as instructor to the Cadettenhaus told me that out of ten boys under his charge only one had actually become an officer. Either through mental, physical, or moral unfitness the other nine were all weeded out before they actually took their places in the army. They were not necessarily bad, weak, or stupid—they simply had not the peculiar virtues which a German officer must possess. Absolute veracity, self-control, punctuality, a high conception of duty, and the Standesehre, and a certain personal dignity, is the least which is expected. It goes without saying that good birth is among the first requirements. In most cases it is necessary to have two relations in the army, who stand as a

sort of guarantee, but if the family prove unexceptionable, this rule can be dispensed with. In any case, whether the candidate seek his admission through the Cadettenschule, or the Gymnasium, or the back door, whether he has protection and high birth, or whether he has no protection, and is the plainest of the plain family of Müller, he has one final barrier to surmount over which no human power, not even that of the Emperor, can help him. If in the course of his ensign's career he has made himself unpopular, or has shown unfavourable qualities, the officers of the regiment to which he is attached black-ball him at his election, and there is the end of his military activity. It is indeed sufficient for one vote against his admission into the brotherhood to shut him out for ever, though it must be understood that the vote may not be given without a proper and proven reason. The officer who votes out of spite runs the very real risk of being cashiered himself, so that a young fellow who is really fitted for his future post has nothing to fear from the judgment of his comrades. This power which is given into the hands of the officer's corps has successfully stemmed the invasion of the Jew and the parvenu, and it has helped to make the bond of comradeship closer and stronger.

And the life of the German officer, once his admission has been secured, of what does it consist that it should be looked upon by so many as the most enivable? It is often a brilliant misery, a brilliant show, and behind the scenes strenuous, unremitting labour, poor prospects, a hand-to-hand

struggle with poverty. For the officer, like the aristocrat, is rarely a man of means; his pay is absolutely inadequate and remains inadequate even in the highest posts, and yet he must always represent his position worthily: he must wear spotless uniforms, he must ride good horses, he must take his share in the life of his comrades, he must never be seen either in a place of refreshment or amusement that is not first-class—inevitably in price as well as in quality. The pay of a careful lieutenant in a line regiment may cover his bare military expenses—his uniforms, mess bills, subscriptions, etc., but it will do no more than that, and it is therefore a law that no one can become an officer without a guarantee "Zulage" of at least £3 a month. This is the very least—it is granted by the Emperor in deserving cases—but it is the most pitiful penury. I heard of one young officer, in a crack regiment in Berlin, who existed on this sum, and the tale of his struggles has always aroused my deepest admiration. He even washed his pocket-handkerchiefs himself, and cleaned his white kid gloves with benzine, and lived on food which would make the British workman even sorrier for himself than he is. Yet he was one of the smartest men of his regiment! This is, of course, an extreme case, and was only possible in earlier and cheaper days, but in modified degrees the same heroic struggle is to be found everywhere. And then there is the blank hopelessness of it all. An ordinarily intelligent man has no prospects. The advancement is painfully slow—he is generally ten to fourteen years a lieutenant—and in the ordinary course of events the Emperor will graciously

dispense with his services in the best years of his life. He may, perhaps, reach the rank of major or lieutenant-colonel, and then one fine morning he will wake up to find the fatal blue letter on his table and know that his career is finished; that hale, hearty, hard-working, and faithful though he may be, his country has no more need of him. "Going to bed with the helmet and waking up with the top-hat," is the officer's whimsical description of the incident. But in reality this is the tragedy of German military life, and it is one to which most must look forward. An intelligence even well above the average is not sufficient to guarantee a successful, much less a brilliant, career. For one good post there are always a hundred candidates; and what good does it do B. if he has done well in his examination if A. has done better? The prize is not for him. And what of A.'s career? It is not said that now he has been passed into the Staff College his success is established. Without means, without family, he is still unlikely to rise to any high post. Study the Rangliste, and you will find that the generals, commanders, and so on are all men of noble birth, and only under exceptional circumstances is the necessary (not hereditary) patent of nobility granted to a talented bourgeois officer.

So much for the prospects. Added to the hopelessness of the average officer's outlook, there is the strenuous, almost unremitting, duty, its exhausting monotony, the short, insignificant respites. The authorities recognise the brain-killing propensities of the daily routine, and as much as possible is done

to give the officer a chance to see the world and to gain experience and relaxation. There are "Commandos" abroad for the officer who wishes to study languages, Commandos in Berlin, Hanover, and so on, and the officer who can afford it is always given leave to travel and hunt even in the most remote corners of the hemisphere. But how many officers can afford such luxuries? And the officer who has been granted one brilliant Commando—say to the riding-school in Hanover for a year—need hope for no more *bon bouches* of that sort for a long time to come. So the daily round goes on. In Karlsruhe the life is comparatively full of relaxation. At a dinner party in Berlin, where officers from a dozen different regiments were gathered together, a civilian observed that they had all grumbled about their garrisons except a certain Lieutenant X., who had listened to the complainings with a smile of sweet content.

"That would be the last straw if *he* grumbled!" retorted a Hussar captain. "*He* is stationed at Karlsruhe. There isn't one of us who wouldn't crawl on his knees backwards to get there?"

No doubt the Karlsruhe civilian would shake his head over such a reckless statement, but the officer is less spoilt and the despised Residenz is a wildly exciting spot, a military paradise, compared to the garrisons of some of the best regiments. Here, at least, the officer is the *enfant gâté* at Court and in Society. He has more invitations than he can accept, and if he should have an evening free he has a seat in the opera practically without charge.

It is very different with some of his less fortunate comrades. Far away on the desolate Russian frontier, in miserable villages where there is no house to which a man could bring his wife and children, out of reach of all human intercourse outside the regiment, hundreds of officers, belonging to crack regiments for the most part, are spending the best years of their life with only the faintest prospect of one day being transferred—perhaps to some garrison a degree worse! These garrisons are the most dangerous for the young officer. It is there that in pure desperation he is tempted to drink and gambling, though he knows that both vices are his sure undoing. Even if the commander at his own risk ventures to close an eye to the conduct of his officers. his sin is bound to find him out. There comes the pitiless strain of the manœuvres, and only he who is fit in mind and body can pass through the ordeal in safety. The yearly manœuvres are, in fact, the high test which is put to the whole body and to each individual. It is the great winnowing time of the German Army. When the two months are over the "Blue Letters" are as plentiful as leaves in autumn. Generals who have failed to distinguish themselves, colonels whose regiments have lacked smartness, captains who have "muddled," sometimes even lieutenants—they all go through the unpleasant experience which I have already described as exchanging the helmet for the top-hat. Consequently the profligate and the incapable is the great exception, and his career is short and disastrous. He is like a badly working cog in an

immense piece of machinery, and he is promptly taken out, thrown on the rubbish heap, and replaced by another and better.

"All actions which can injure the reputation of the individual or of the whole body, especially all dissipation, drinking, gambling, the acceptation of obligations which might have the appearance of dishonesty, risky speculations, participation in the promotion of companies whose purpose and reputation is not irreproachable, also all efforts to obtain wealth by means not clearly above all criticism, these must the officer hold far from him. The more wealth and luxury increase elsewhere. the more serious does the officer's duty become. never to forget that it is not material possessions which has given him and will continue to give him his high and honoured place in the State and in Society. Not alone is the officer's fitness injured by an effeminate mode of life, but his whole standing will be endangered by the struggle after wealth and luxury."

Such is the Emperor's grave warning, and it has proved more than a warning. Luxury, ostentation, all forms of dissipation, have been put down with an iron hand, and the officers' Corps is a model for the nation and the world in the stern fulfilment of its hard duty, in its self-sacrifice, its self-control, its self-abnegation. The officer literally dedicates his whole life to his profession. He may not even marry without the Emperor's consent, and that cannot be obtained until he has proved that his future wife brings with her a good name and a spotless reputation, and that he has

sufficient wealth to keep her as his position demands.

And the return for this absolute surrender—the reward? Material reward there is none; there is only this. that the officer is looked upon and treated as a man apart, as the bearer and protector of the national honour, as a great high priest whose vestment is the symbol of the noblest human calling. Accustom yourself to this standpoint, and you will understand why it is expressly commanded that an officer shall only associate in the best society, that he must keep himself clean from all possible contamination, and that should he become contaminated he must be prepared to pay for the injury done to his calling with his life. He is the Levite of the nation, and in return for his renunciations he is granted certain privileges. The first and greatest of these is his position in Society. The officer has the entrée into every social circle no matter how exalted; he is the comrade of his Emperor, he is respected by all classes save those which regard national honour as of no account. From the moment that Herr Schmidt dons the King's coat his whole position in the world changes—he has become somebody, he can no longer be ignored. This immense respect which is shown to the *uniform* would be a danger if the man who wore it were unworthy of respect, but in truth the veneration with which the officer is treated is by no means blind, and has not its source in a morbid worship of militarism. It is because the average German officer is a man of high principles, clean living, and clean thinking that the uniform has come to be

looked upon as a guarantee, a hall-mark. There is, as in everything, the shadowy side. There are men who enter the Army simply to obtain the position it gives, though that type of soldier soon wearies of the privilege when he finds at what cost it must be bought; there are youngsters enough who give themselves great airs over their civilian brothers. In a German Witzblatt I remember seeing a picture of a Prussian lieutenant standing at the foot of Mont Blanc, stroking the vestige of a moustache, and contemplating the mighty mountain with a haughty eye.

"Donnerwetter! how ridiculously small a civilian must feel!" is his only remark, and there is enough truth in the jest to make one laugh heartily. But his arrogance is simply a malady of youth and disappears with the lieutenant's epaulettes. On the whole one is surprised at the simplicity and unaffectedness of the average German officer. The lieutenant may seem a trifle conceited when you observe him on the street—and, indeed, show me the young man who would not feel a twinge of self-satisfaction when his uniform is so new and fits his slight figure to perfection?—but once you get to know him this impression vanishes. He is the cavalier *par excellence*, unfailing in his courtly politeness, but neither stiff nor pretentious. As I write a vivid picture arises out of my many memories of a little dance we gave in the course of this winter. There were six or seven lieutenants from the same regiment present—not boys by any means, most of them being well over twenty-five—and in an interval they were set down to a competition in—

hat trimming! The results after the allotted ten minutes were quite remarkable; a straw toque with a green veil behind ("to keep off sunstroke," as the originator proudly explained to the mystified judge), pink and yellow roses clustered in front, and a blue ribbon was one of the most effective efforts. But the picture of a six-foot, broad-shouldered officer huddled together in a remote corner struggling with a needle and cotton and refractory ribbons can still bring tears of laughter to my eyes. Afterwards they played musical-chairs and the Queen of Sheba with the energy and enthusiasm of schoolboys. I hasten to tender my apologies; I am sure no self-respecting schoolboy would have lowered himself sufficiently to have indulged in the childish amusements of those grown men, one of them already burdened with the responsibilities of an adjutancy. I must add, however, that had a number of civilians been present they would scarcely have acted as they did; it was only because they were *entre eux* that they felt they could relax from the dignity which their uniform requires of them in public life.

Such, then, is the arrogant, Schwert-rasselnder Prussian officer; let us now pass on to the great force at whose head he stands, and consider what the units are worth and how it fares with them. I have seen the German soldier in a good many different aspects. I have seen him assisting the police against an excited mob; I have seen him helping our elderly Karlsruhe firemen in the midst of a big conflagration. I have seen him dancing with his Schatz at the Kaiser Ball; I have seen him in his

AT THE MANŒUVRES.

very best at the Kaiser Parade and at his very best in the stress of the manœuvres, and I flatter myself that I know him very fairly. He is not an elegant individual; in south Germany, where the whole race is smaller, he is of middle height, thick-set, somewhat clumsy of build, the latter feature emphasised by his uniform, which, though excellent in material, fits *à peu près* only. But he is the picture of health and sturdy strength. As you watch the Grenadiers on Sunday morning marching to the military church, you are struck less by the individual smartness as by the respectability, the honesty and orderliness of character, which each weather-beaten young face expresses. You feel that these are not show soldiers, they are not paraded through the town as a sort of national advertisment; they are the sturdy bulwark of their country, the best elements which the people can produce being trained not only to fight but to live a healthy, decent life. And as they look so they are. I remember last summer reading an account of the German manœuvres, in which the English writer expressed his admiration for the German soldier's powers of endurance and, above all, of his sobriety and orderliness not only on duty but in his amusements. He mentioned that during the whole time he had been with the troops he had not seen one drunken or disorderly soldier. I was gratified to find my own experience thus endorsed by one of my own countrymen. It happened that in that same summer the Kaiser Parade took place in our neighbourhood, so that a whole Army Corps — 35,000 men — were stationed in and about Karlsruhe. During the

three days in which we were thus inundated, the town, though alive with different uniforms, was absolutely quiet and orderly. There were no cases of drunkenness or rowdiness—a church festival could not have been more sober. At to the Parade itself, it was a sight which could not but excite even the most critical foreigner to unbounded admiration. It was not the mere incident of the march past—most armies can manage that much—but it was the perfect discipline, the good-humour of the troops, their whole-hearted participation in this great event, which was like a breath of fresh clean air. One could see as they tramped past our carriage on the way to their assigned positions on the field, that each one of them was impressed with his own importance, his own power to help his superiors to the Emperor's praise. And surely even the Emperor—severe critic though he is supposed to be—must have been well satisfied on that day. There was not a hitch, not a fault, not an instant's confusion, each man moving as though he were the incorporate part of his neighbour; an immense piece of machinery seemed to come to life at a word, a signal, "Machinery!" says the foreign critic with a self-satisfied shake of the head. "Yes, that typifies the German soldier—a piece of machinery without initiative." Possibly the critic is right. I do not think either that if the German soldier were left to his own devices that he would perform any feats of strategy—it is not expected of him. The officers are the brains and the soldiers are the body, and it is not desirable that either should attempt the work of the other. Abso-

lute blind obedience and discipline is the first and greatest virtue of the German soldier, and the Franco-Prussian war proved that it was worth more than the individual intelligence of the Frenchman.

As to the methods by which the German is trained to this state of perfection, I can quite well believe it when I am told that the two years which the common man spends with the troops are the happiest and healthiest in his life. Certainly at no other time is he so well clothed, well fed, and well looked after. I am speaking now of the ordinary private—"Freiwilliger." The Einjähriger, that is to say the educated man who has passed a certain examination and need only serve one year, has no doubt his bad moments. It is without doubt an excellent discipline, but it cannot be always agreeable to share the life, even to the sleeping quarters, of the common soldier, and to be helpless before the abuse of the under-officer, who not seldom takes a spiteful delight in exercising his temporary authority over his social superior. "Words, not deeds," however, is the extent of the bullying to which the private as well as the Einjähriger has to submit. The under-officer may pour out his whole vocabulary over the head of the raw, and usually very stupid, recruit, but the brutality with which the German soldier is supposed to be treated is a mere fable. The few cases of misused authority are always severely punished, and are not more frequent than in any other branch of life. The officer himself is on excellent terms with his men. The Burschen (orderlies) are usually devoted to their superiors and their families, whom

they serve in every conceivable capacity from butler to nurse-maid. At no time can one judge so well of the relations between officers and men as at the Kaiser Ball, where the soldier plays the leading part. That he is not a broken-spirited, driven, bullied victim of militarism is obvious. At the opening of the proceedings a military play is given in which he glories in the part of the officer, taking off the characteristics and eccentricities of some particular personage, to the delight of the officer's Corps, even of the object himself. Afterwards comes the dancing. Each soldier may bring one "lady" friend, who is regaled with sausage and beer free of charge. Her cavalier's first act is to bring her up to his favourite lieutenant, and at attention, with a broad grin on his healthy, red face ask, "Ob der Herr Lieutenant nicht mit der Meinen tanzen nöchte?" ("If the Herr Lieutenant would not like to dance with his girl?") And the lieutenant waltzes off with the blushing little housemaid, whilst the soldier, who would not have parted with her to an equal for all the riches in the world, stands aside ready to burst with pride and delight. Afterwards the lieutenants dance with all the leading ladies in turn, the under-officers' wives and so on, and woe to him who through an oversight misses out one of the fair and jealous partners! When this social duty is over the officers disappear, and the under-officers advance to the position of the "great men" of the evening.

I have had sufficient opportunity to study the relations between the private and the under-officer, not only at the Kaiser Ball, but on the exercising

AT THE MANŒUVRES. WAITING FOR ZEPPELIN III.

ground and in the bivouac, and the tone has always seemed to be one of open good-comradeship. I remember after the Kaiser Parade we were allowed to wander through the camp of a regiment on its way back to the garrison. Zeppelin III. was expected every minute, and the soldiers were sitting and lying in little groups singing their songs, and keeping a sharp look-out in the direction from whence the air-ship was expected to appear. The under-officers mingled with the men, joined in the singing, exchanged jokes, drank with them, and it was obvious that dislike or fear were out of the question. No doubt the under-officer is something of a martinet in work time, and a fine stickler for exactitude, but I do not fancy that the ordinary German soldier feels himself particularly injured when he is told after the twentieth blunder that he is a sheep's head, an imbecile, an idiot, a donkey, etc. Perhaps he thinks so himself. This abuse is just what he understands, and it must be said that in his turn the under-officer gets his share—in fact, the criticism goes down the scale, adapting itself to the rank of the criticised with amusing exactness. At a manœuvre a regiment fails to distinguish itself—the general calls the colonel to him—

"Lieber Kamarad, a little more smartness is necessary—the men are too slow. I should be grateful if you would see your way to effecting an improvement."

They shake hands. The colonel calls the major to him—

"Herr Major, his Excellency has expressed his dissatisfaction over the conduct of the troops—the

wretched crawling and slovenliness particularly attracted his notice. I trust you will assist me in correcting these failings."

The major salutes and calls the captains to him—

"Meine Herrn! the colonel is furious with the disgraceful management of the men. It is unheard of—I must request you both by word and example to bring the regiment back to its old smartness. This sort of thing cannot go on. It is the duty of the younger officers," etc. etc.

The captains to the lieutenants—

"The colonel is beside himself about yesterday; never saw such a wretched performance in his life. The leading and behaviour of the men was beneath all criticism. There must be an improvement in these matters. It is the duty of the lieutenant," etc. etc.

The lieutenants to the under-officers—

"What's the matter with your men? Miserable performance! Can't you bring them up to the mark better than that? Upon my word, I'm ashamed of the lot of you, and if there isn't a change for the better in less than no time——"

Under-officers to their men—

"You idiots, you dolts, you sheep's head, you——"

But the English language cannot keep pace with the under-officers' vocabulary, which is rich and lurid. However, the storm blows over at last, and nobody's feelings are wounded beyond healing.

That the two years with the troops is beneficial for the common man is undeniable. At the beginning of the military year you can often see a crowd

of sloppy, underfed, bow-legged, round-shouldered youths being marched off from the station by an under-officer, and a few months later you see the same party in uniform, straight built, well fed, healthy, respectable-looking fellows, who are being taught to live morally and physically a decent, useful life. If eternal peace were signed to-morrow by all the nations, and Germany's Army had to disband, it would be a national disaster—the finest school in the country would be closed. As to the so-called militarism with which Germany is supposed to be inflicted, I can only say that in no other country in the world are military matters less fussed and worried over. Everybody who can, serves his time—it is regarded as something as natural as daily food—and outside the officers and under-officers there is no professional army. There are no hired soldiers; each citizen brings a short time out of his life and sacrifices it to his country, and receives in return a physical and moral training which should fit him all the better for a citizen's career. This seems to me no more militarism than compulsory education. In England no one seems to think it an encroachment on the public liberty to force children up to a certain age to learn; after that—in the most important years of their life—they are allowed to run wild, and the State washes its hands of them. In Germany the State takes up the threads of its responsibility a second time, and, having trained the child, proceeds to train the man. If in this training it recompenses itself by building up an overwhelming force with which to protect itself, it need not, on that account, be accused of undue militarism. It can only be

congratulated on having successfully killed two birds with one stone.

We have now considered the units which go to make up the Emperor's army. In conclusion I can only add that no statistics can reveal its full strength and striking power. The German Army is the result of a steady and uninterrupted development. It has not been and cannot be checked by changes of government; it has not been subjected to the eccentricities and fads of varying civilian muddlers. It has its fixed and tested system on which it has been built up and on which it continues to grow. Unlike the French Army of 1870, and unlike many European armies of to-day, its resources are not only on paper—they actually exist. On the first of May each year the great mobilisation plans are given out, and every single department is tested to prove its absolute readiness and efficiency. There are no "paper" horses, "paper" ammunition, "paper" uniforms, and—worst of all—"paper" men. Everything is there "to the last button on the gaiter," as an officer proudly boasted to me: and if war were declared with an hour's notice the Emperor would only have to give the signal, and in an instant the whole immense machinery would be in movement. Every officer has his sealed orders, and every detail is arranged even to the transport trains and the hours at which they leave for the different frontiers.

The Germans boast that their navy is governed by the same complete readiness and efficiency, and that the health and "moral" of their soldiers and sailors have no equivalent in the world. Most

TEN YEARS LATER: RESERVE MEN AFTER A LONG DAY'S MARCH.

nations claim this superiority, but what I have seen leads me to the conclusion that the German has every right to his pride and every reason to look upon his Army as "model," and upon his Navy as a force of growing and incalculable possibilities.

CHAPTER X

THE GERMAN WOMAN

"KINDER, Kirche, und Küche" is supposed to be the adage of the German woman. I do not know who invented it, but I should like to ask that person how he came to add "Kirche" to the list, or if it was only for the sake of the alliteration. Children and the kitchen—yes, perhaps—but church? With the adage clearly printed in my mind, I have been constantly on the look-out for some proof of its veracity, but hitherto have found none. Perhaps it is a saying which, like so many others, belongs to a time long past, and has been dragged on into the present without anybody taking the trouble to consider whether it is still true. Or perhaps it refers to the sterner northern woman, who takes all her duties with a greater earnestness, though even this latter theory seems to me unlikely. For the German lady—according to my observations—worries less about church than any other lady in the world. That is not to say that she is irreligious—quite the contrary; but if she attends morning service once a week for an hour, she considers herself a tremendous churchgoer; and if she assists in the choir, which sings on great occasions, she is looked upon as a person of extreme piety and devotion. On the other hand,

there are in Karlsruhe hundreds of women—especially of the better class—who go to church occasionally, sometimes only at Christmas and Easter, and who are looked upon as perfectly respectable Christian people. They do their duty by the Church, they pay their taxes, they send the clergyman food and clothes for his charities, they are on bowing, and perhaps on calling, terms with him as a private individual, but he plays no active part in their lives, and church decorations, parish work, and all the small practical duties with which an Englishwoman of leisure loves to load herself, are practically unknown. I say "practically" for safety's sake, for it is just possible that in some remote corner of Karlsruhe some busy little body is endeavouring to become the Pffarer's right hand, but I have not yet met her, and her existence is a pure surmise.

It is quite true that the churches are always overcrowded, and by far the greater part with women, but it is a noted fact that Karlsruhe is too poorly provided in this respect, and in other towns, Frankfurt and Mannhein for instance, the case is very different. Of course I am speaking of the Protestant German woman; the Catholic is compelled by her religion to keep to a more frequent attendance. The German State Church is broad in the broadest sense, and allows its children to do and think very much what they like. Hence, if Frau Schmidt does not go to church every Sunday morning, the fact is not made the subject of a nine days' scandal, nor does the clergyman come round to inquire the reason of her non-attendance. As in

everything, so in the matter of religion the German refuses to accept the great maxim that you must always judge by appearances, and Frau Schmidt's neighbours would no more think of condemning her morality on the strength of her irregular churchgoing than they would think of questioning her position in society on the strength of her shabby and old-fashioned clothes. On the whole, the chief churchgoers are servants, young girls, and old women. I strongly suspect the girls of going because they must, and the old women of going because it affords such an excellent opportunity to gossip before the service begins, but I may be doing both a glaring injustice, and will not insist upon the point. Society women are rarely, if ever, seen, unless they come with the Court as a matter of duty. The truth is that the main reason which brings most society women to church does not exist in this part of the world. Nobody comes to show off their fine feathers. To go into a west-end church here, is to receive an impression of dowdy respectability, and if Mrs. Jones with a bevy of friends in Sunday furs and furbelows were to sail magnificently down the aisle, I think they would cause something like a panic. In my mind's eye I can see a dozen heads wagged in doubt and alarm. "Das ist eine eigentümliche Gesellschaft!" the usual congregation would murmur at the bottom of its sober soul, thereby inferring that Mrs. Jones and her fashionable party were distinctly "shady" characters. Thus the woman who lives for clothes—if she exists in Germany—finds no attraction in churchgoing, and the rest do just what they like, unbound by the

mighty law of custom, and unthreatened by the terrors of parish and neighbourly criticism.

So much for the "Kirche" part of the adage, which—as I have said at the beginning of the chapter—I much suspect of having been added on because it begins with "k" and harmonises agreeably with "Kinder." The other two clauses require more serious consideration because they do still play a very important part in the German woman's life—a very important part, but by no means an exclusive one. All German girls are brought up with the idea that they will in all probability get married, or, at any rate, that it will be entirely their own fault if they do not. The average German is a decidedly family man, and is thankful if he can get a wife at all, so that a girl must be a pauper and a deformity combined not to be able to marry if she wants to. As a rule, she still "wants," and, as a rule, she marries very early in life. It is quite usual for her to enter into society at seventeen and be married at eighteen, and a girl of twenty-five who has not yet settled down is looked upon in the light of a confirmed spinster. There was a time when her condition would have been regarded by her friends with pity and a mild disparagement—the unmarried woman was in fact a woman who had completely failed in her life's vocation—but, nowadays, public opinion is beginning to turn. It is recognised by a certain party of both sexes that a woman can have another reason for her existence besides marriage, and that it can be an equally good reason. I know quite a number of girls who are studying for some profession, and who frankly admit that their lives

are so interesting, their work so absorbing, that they do not care whether they get married or not, and are entirely opposed to the idea of marriage as the goal of a woman's existence. "If the right man comes, well and good—if not, I am perfectly satisfied as I am," is their verdict.

These are the talented people, consequently in the minority, and the class of girl who, without talent, is yet striving for some market for her energy, is still too small to be reckoned with in Germany. Those who have no particular bent accept marriage as the one profession open to them. Thus German women can be divided into two groups—those who are blessed with talent and a profession, and those who have neither and marry. The latter, the majority, should be considered first, as it is to them that the adage, "Kinder, Kirche, and Küche," is applied, and it is of them that the foreigner immediately thinks when he is asked to describe the German woman. I know so well the picture that arises before his mind's eye—a big, portly woman, very fat, very "comfortable," with red cheeks, fair hair—very badly done—and enough intelligence to look after the kitchen and keep the children in order. She is her husband's unpaid housekeeper, she sees to his dinner, mends his clothes, does up his boots even in the street (I have heard this statement made in all seriousness !), and generally does her best to pay for the honour he has done her in making her his wife. This picture reminds me very much of the check-suited horror which I have already described as the type of Englishman which the foreigner accepts as typical. It is not to be denied that the

average German woman of the educated class is not a lovely or elegant person. In Karlsruhe, for instance, there are pretty children by the dozens, and the most beautiful old women I have ever seen, but a beautiful young woman is a rarity. The first involuntary question of an observant stranger is always, "Where do all the pretty children go to, and where do all the charming old ladies come from?"—a question not hard to answer. The children turn into women with good, even nobly cut, features, exceptionally fine eyes, but—neglected complexions and neglected figures, faults which, in the prime of life, count for more than anything. Later on, the old lady appears with her fine features and eyes, and no one notices the defects which spoilt the woman. The German woman's unattractiveness is therefore entirely her own fault. Her lack of smartness in dress, and her indifference to physical culture, is in fact her curse. As regards dress, she is nowhere very brilliant, and in Karlsruhe, where the "Fashion" is always so unfashionable that a feminine stranger must feel quite rejuvenated when she walks through the streets, she is positively dowdy. She seems born without any sort of taste where dress is concerned. Poverty cannot excuse her; even when she has two respectable coats and skirts, she ruins both by wearing the coat of one with the skirt of another, and she is, moreover, capable of spending quite large sums on an atrocity which in England would stamp her at once as "impossible." It is only necessary to try and shop in Karlsruhe to understand the full enormity of the case. Suppose that a middle-class Englishwoman with moderate means wishes to buy

herself a blouse. She cannot afford to go to the very highest prices, and when she tries to obtain what she wants with moderate prices, she finds that she has no choice—unless it is a choice to have to decide between one form of ugliness and another. If she explains to the shopman what she wants, he shrugs his shoulders regretfully: "We don't keep it—our customers don't care for it. But this is much prettier—every one is wearing it." And he produces an article which sends the Englishwoman away wondering how it is possible that a people so highly sensitive to beauty in all other forms can tolerate such eyesores in their everyday life. For the shopman is perfectly right. "It" is worn by everybody—that is to say, everybody of the middle class. Hideous plaid blouses, red, blue, and green, like travelling-rugs, muddy brown coats and skirts of vile cut, much-bebraided black sacque coats, square-toed boots, nondescript hats which match every dress equally badly, highly coloured kid gloves (when they are not cotton), in summer cut-out blouses, shoes of the most atrocious colours under the sun, and last and worst of all—Reform! What evil genius was it, I wonder, that hit on the German woman's besetting weakness, and discovered a mode of attire which gives it full play and encourages it with the excuse of "health," "hygiene," and other nonsense of the same sort. To let herself go, to take things easy, to be as comfortable as possible—that is the questionable physical ideal towards which the German woman tends. Consequently, a dress cut like a sack, without collar, without waist, without shape, which she can slip in and out of with

a minimum amount of exertion and trouble, appeals tremendously to her. She talks a great deal about her health and so on, and grows stout, clumsy, pasty, sloppy, in fact everything that is the reverse of healthy. The health part of the matter has simply nothing to do with it. Reform, as it is called, is comfortable, and what does it matter if, at the age of thirty, you look like an old washerwoman, so long as you are comfortable? A lady artist once told me that Reform was beautiful, Grecian, classic, and a good many other things besides, which I have not yet had the pleasure of observing. I have only seen objects which were awful—I mean awful in the true sense of the word, awe-inspiringly terrible. That a woman can consent to make such an object of herself proves that as far as dress is concerned she is either totally indifferent or totally tasteless. In the German woman's case it is a little of both. She does not care very much what she looks like, and consequently she never tries to learn from other people, or to improve her taste. She is quite capable of spending her days in the same dress if it would only last out long enough. This brings me back to my first admission that is far from smart, that she is in fact dowdy, and has never really been anything else at any time of her life. The German backfisch—the equivalent to our bread-and-butter miss—is a lively wide-awake young person who does indeed pay some attention to her appearance, but usually without the smallest success. Her mother has no taste, and so she has no taste, and after she has married and her business in society over, what little chic she ever had vanishes. She is then not exactly

disorderly, everything about her—her home and children—is always scrupulously clean and neat, but one misses a certain delicacy, a certain feminine charm. In a word, she is an excellent painstaking housekeeper, but no artist in her home life; she has no eye for details or suitabilities. Everything is solid, good, and dull.

On the other hand, I must defend her from the reputation of being no more than her husband's housekeeper—from an unwarrantable exaggeration of the "Kinder, Kirche, und Küche" theory. A middle-class German woman certainly does mend her husband's clothes, and does look after the house and the children much more than an Englishwoman does. Very often she cannot afford more than one servant, and, even when she rises to the magnificence of two, she is usually so accustomed to the routine that she cannot give it up, and is always interfering in the household—a course of conduct to which, fortunately, most German servants are hardened. But there is one point which must not be overlooked—she is her husband's companion and his helpmate, and she holds a commanding influence in his life. She is not the submissive, worshipping, and bullied slave of the fables. When the Empress Frederic came to Germany and announced her intention of raising and freeing German women, the latter rose *en masse* with the indignant protest that they had all the freedom and all the means to progress which they needed. Such is indeed the case—what the German woman is she is of her own free will, and she advances after her own fashion, winning quietly her position in the world by reason of her character

and her education. For she is courageous, loyal, industrious, filled with the sense of her responsibilities, determined, and clear headed. She is the woman to whom a man can turn in time of difficulty and trial with the knowledge that he will find in her a sturdy comrade, ready to share every burden and sacrifice. She is a direct descendant of the woman who, in the great days when Germany was struggling for her freedom, sold their wedding-rings and wore rings of iron in order that the Fatherland might not lack the means to carry on the conflict. She brings sacrifices to-day, though of another sort. The wife, whose officer husband attends Court functions and associates in the highest society, cooks his dinner, nurses and dresses the children, goes without every luxury in order that he may be able to represent his name and his position fittingly. She dresses shabbily, he in the smartest uniforms; she restricts herself to the smallest pleasures, whilst he lives a life of outward brilliancy. To all appearances she *is* an unpaid housekeeper, and yet—verily she hath her reward. She is really her husband's helpmate, and this, together with the trust and confidence that he gives her in return, is all the happiness she asks of life. She knows that he, too, has his hardships to bear, and she is proud that she can take her part in them—she has, in fact, won the right to share everything with him, both joy and sorrow. It is the same in every sphere. The wife, the daughter, the sister—they are all of the same calibre, and they bring willingly, and not because they must, sacrifices to their name or their love, which seem almost overwhelming. And they are

by no means merely passive victims of their own powers of self-abnegation. I know one woman whose husband is a professor of high reputation. In spite of the fact that they have three children and one servant, she manages to find time to arrange his notes, correct his lectures, and help him with his instruments. She dresses disgracefully, and looks like a better-class servant, but she is an intelligent, highly educated woman, and her life is crowded with intellectual as well as domestic interest. She is an example taken out of a great class. On the one hand, she holds the home together; a devoted mother and wife, she leaves no particle of her home duties unfulfilled; she neglects herself. Her life, seen by the Englishwoman, is full of sacrifice and hardship, but on the other hand, she is intellectually keenly alive. She can—if she will—talk to you with understanding on art, music, science, literature, even on politics, though the latter interest her as little as they interest her husband; she is well read, and is well up in all the social and economical questions of the day; she is, *en fin*, anything but a mere housekeeper.

Nevertheless, though a great deal must be added on to the Kinder, Kirche, and Küche programme in order to obtain a correct survey of the German woman's interests, the two first items are very serious topics in her ordinary conversation. In fact, wherever she goes and whatever she does, her household interests seem to cling to her. I remember in a Lohengrin performance hearing one lady whisper to another—

"Hören Sie mal, Gnädige Frau, was machen Sie

mit Ihrem Wurstzipfeln ?" (" Tell me, Mrs. —— what do *you* do with your sausage ends ? ")

Now, I knew that the speaker was very musical, that there was not a tone in the opera which she did not know and appreciate, that the text and its full meaning was ABC to her, but her home and its absorbing problems reoccurred to her, and, carried off on the wings of impulse, she asked the vital question whose answer I was unfortunate enough to miss, thanks to " The Bridal Chorus." I believe, however, that in other countries besides Germany the matters of servants and cooking are not wholly tabooed subjects among ladies, so that it would be unwise to throw stones if the German Hausfrau sins considerably in this respect. At any rate, I can only say in her defence that she *can* talk on other matters if she chooses, and that her brains are far from idle. I cannot pretend, however, that she is a very attractive woman. Her lack of vanity, her very unselfishness, devotion, and earnestness, are virtues which tend to make her ponderous, a little stodgy, though not insipid. She lacks the Englishwoman's *savoir-vivre* and the Frenchwoman's lightness of touch, and though we cannot shut our hearts against her sincerity and goodness, though we are forced to admire and even envy the sterling qualities to which her country owes so much, she leaves our enthusiasm limping. I suppose the essentially German qualities of thoroughness and Pflichtgefühl are too massive for our ideas of femininity.

It would be unfair and also a serious error not to add that there is a subdivision of the domestic group which *is* attractive, and which has a charge

entirely of its own. If you take a step upward on the social ladder, you may suddenly find yourself face to face with a type which will completely upset all your previous ideas and theories. Amongst the aristocracy, and even amongst the old bourgeois families, there are women whose grace, dignity, and refinement are united to the sterling virtues of her less interesting sister, making of her a personage whose equal it would be hard to find in any part of the world. I venture to place the present German Empress as a type of this class. Domesticated, devoted body and soul to her duty, self-effacing yet all-powerful, noble in bearing and in life, tactful and gracious, she is the German ideal of a woman, and in modified degrees one meets her everywhere in the circles of the upper classes. There the indifference to outward things is exchanged for a refinement of taste which never, as it does, alas, in other lands, degenerates into vulgar ostentation. I have never yet seen a German lady of position loudly or overdressed, but I have seen her as elegant, as "vornehm," as any other woman under the sun. I even dare assert that a German woman at her best is not to be rivalled. She has a certain strength, a certain grandness of bearing and character, which more than atones for the lack of daintiness, chic, or whatever you like to call it, which distinguishes the woman of other lands. The high principles on which her life is built seem to find their expression in her face and carriage, and there is, added to this worth, the might of an unequalled education. The reason why she is better educated than other women is a subject for another chapter—it is sufficient for the present

to state the fact. Like the whole aristocracy, she carries the principle of *noblesse oblige* into her branch of life, and to know her is to admire her, to feel for her an ungrudging admiration and even reverence. But alas, she is not to be met on the streets. She leads, for the most part, an exclusive life of her own—not a narrow life, for her interests are peculiarly wide—but socially she rarely moves out of her circle. So I suppose it is quite natural that a foreigner should shake his head over the woman he meets on his tour of inspection. The extraordinary mixtures of dowdy colours, the orderly disorder of their attire, the badly done hair, neglected figures, the Reform—yes, I can understand and sympathise with his feelings. I can only comfort him with the hope that one day things will grow better, and that, in the meantime, if he gives himself the trouble to look for them, he will find charming as well as clever women hidden away in the sober-looking houses so difficult of access.

There is now the other great division in the woman's world to be considered—the talented, professional girls and women, who are working either for their living or because work seems to them life's highest happiness. Their numbers are growing daily. Without sound, without commotion, the barriers which were held up against woman's entry into the professions have been overthrown. The first heroic woman's battle in the Universities, her firm defiance of the insults, irritations, and unfairness of the students and professors, who did not scruple to destroy her work or grossly underestimate its value, has cleared the road for hundreds of others

who are pressing eagerly forward. It is estimated, for instance, that there are seventy women doctors in Germany, and that they have more to do than they can manage, and in this profession as in many others the demand is rapidly increasing. Women doctors, scientists, dentists, writers, painters, musicians, lecturers, gardeners, farmers—they are all on the march, and though the struggle against prejudice and envy may be hard, the ultimate victory is sure. It is all the surer because there is nothing hysterical or violent in the German woman's advance. She is overcoming her enemies, not by stone-throwing and assault, but by the force of her real value, character, and attainments. You can suppress rowdyism and noise, but you cannot suppress ability, and the German woman student has proved herself more than able to fill the posts which she covets. She may not be outwardly very attractive—the pioneers of a great movement are usually unattractive, the struggle absorbs too much of their energy—but she is brilliantly clever, hard working, thorough, and blessed with an indomitable purpose. If the political progress seems slow in English eyes, it is because it is less noisy and also because politics play a comparatively small part in German life.

"I cannot understand the feverish interest you take in the elections," a German lady said to me, the other day. "I confess that politics bore me to extinction, and I fancy they bore most Germans except those actually engaged in the fray." And she was one of the emancipated—one of the women workers! Still, in spite of this indifference, I have heard well-informed men declare that the German

woman's vote is not far off—one even asserted boldly that it lay nearer in the future than the Englishwoman's, because she had not alienated the sympathy of moderate people by her extreme conduct. I do not profess to know how much truth there is in these optimistic prophesies, or in how far they are really optimistic, but of one thing I am sure—that mentally she is as well prepared as any other woman in the world for the new burden, and that she will endeavour to do her duty faithfully.

CHAPTER XI

SPORTING MATTERS

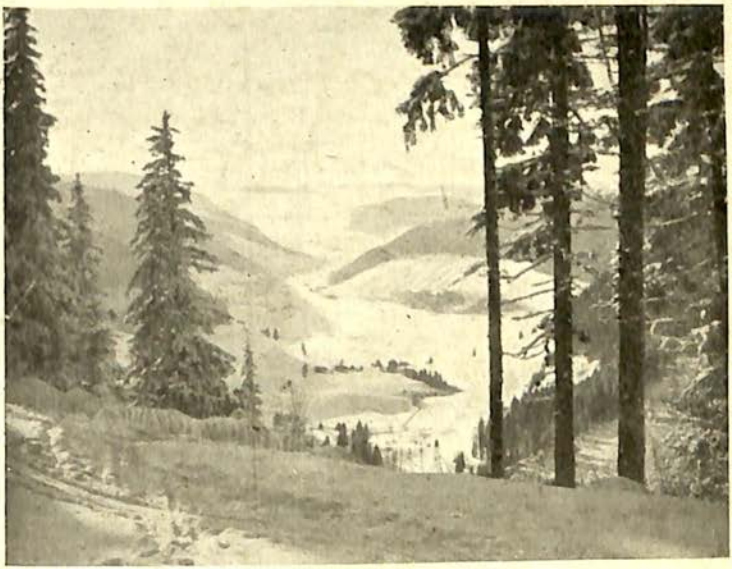
"HALF-PAST four on a dreary January morning, a drizzling rain, a dank, chilly atmosphere —surely not very promising conditions for a day's sport amidst snow and ice!"

This was the grumbled verdict of the English friend when I aroused her from her cruelly curtailed slumbers to accompany me on a long-planned expedition into the Black Forest. Myself too sleepy to expostulate, and through want of experience a little shaken in my hopes by the gloomy outlook, I merely pointed to my German friend, who was going about her preparations with calm cheerfulness.

"Everybody will think us mad parading through the mud with tobogganoes!" said English Ignorance, decidedly grumpy.

"Wait and see!" retorted German Wisdom, going on with her breakfast.

Coffee and rolls—even if the latter remind one somewhat of yesterday—are great magicians, and at half-past five our party, enlarged by outside contingents, was on its way down the silent streets in the best of spirits, dragging behind a veritable army of bumping, very out-of-place-looking tobogganoes. There is a decided charm in getting up and going



THE BLACK FOREST IN WINTER.

A SKI PARTY IN THE BLACK FOREST.

out at unearthly hours—occasionally. It is a cause of real moral elevation to look at the blank lightless windows, and know that behind the shutters lazy folk are still dreaming, whilst you are awake and active. You have an overweening contempt for such people, and a strong desire to spoil their slumbers by creating as much noise as possible. In fact, we felt ourselves the heroes of Karlsruhe until we reached the station, where our self-satisfaction was not a little damped by the discovery that we were only a few among many. Stout German ladies, whom you could hardly imagine taking a moderate walk, in short skirts, thick boots, and pert Alpine caps; young girls, old men, young men, all in correct sporting attire, crowded round the booking-office, and English Ignorance rubbed its eyes.

"Am I really in Germany, or am I dreaming?" she inquired dazedly.

"If you are dreaming, please wake up, or we shall miss the train!" retorted German Wisdom, taking third-class tickets.

German third-class carriages are uncushioned horrors which we usually scorn, but it is part of the sport to be as uncomfortable as possible, and as none of our companions seemed to think of second-class luxuries we followed meekly into the glorified cattle-trucks set at our disposal. Fortunately we were a sufficiently large party to obtain a compartment all to ourselves. I say "fortunately," for by this time we were all thoroughly awake, and our spirits had risen to a degree which, together with our suspiciously new-looking tobogganoes, must have

betrayed to the other calm and sober travellers that this excursion was something new too, that we were, in fact, far from being veterans. After an hour in the "Bummelzug," which stopped at every station to pick up fresh parties, we arrived at a junction, where we were turned out and transferred into a little mountain railway. We had already climbed a few hundred feet upwards, and a thin covering of snow shimmered hopefully beneath the station lights.

"I trust there will be more than that where we are going to!" said English Ignorance, to which remark German Wisdom deigned no answer.

It was a decidedly dirty and smelly little mountain train, but it performed wonders, transporting us out of the land of gloom and slush into a land of fairy-like and spotless beauty. Thick snow lay on the ground as we descended from our murky compartment, and the dawn breaking through the grey mists revealed great fir-covered mountains, silent and awe-inspiring in their unsullied magnificence. English Ignorance collapsed into speechless admiration as the sleigh glided along the winding road, the bells ringing out on to the crisp stillness, the horses' hoofs muffled to a soft, almost inaudible, thud. German Wisdom developed a certain pardonable amount of pride.

"You haven't anything like this in England, have you, now?"

And English Ignorance, usually exceedingly arrogant, meekly admitted that this world which a short train journey had revealed was something as new as it was wonderful.

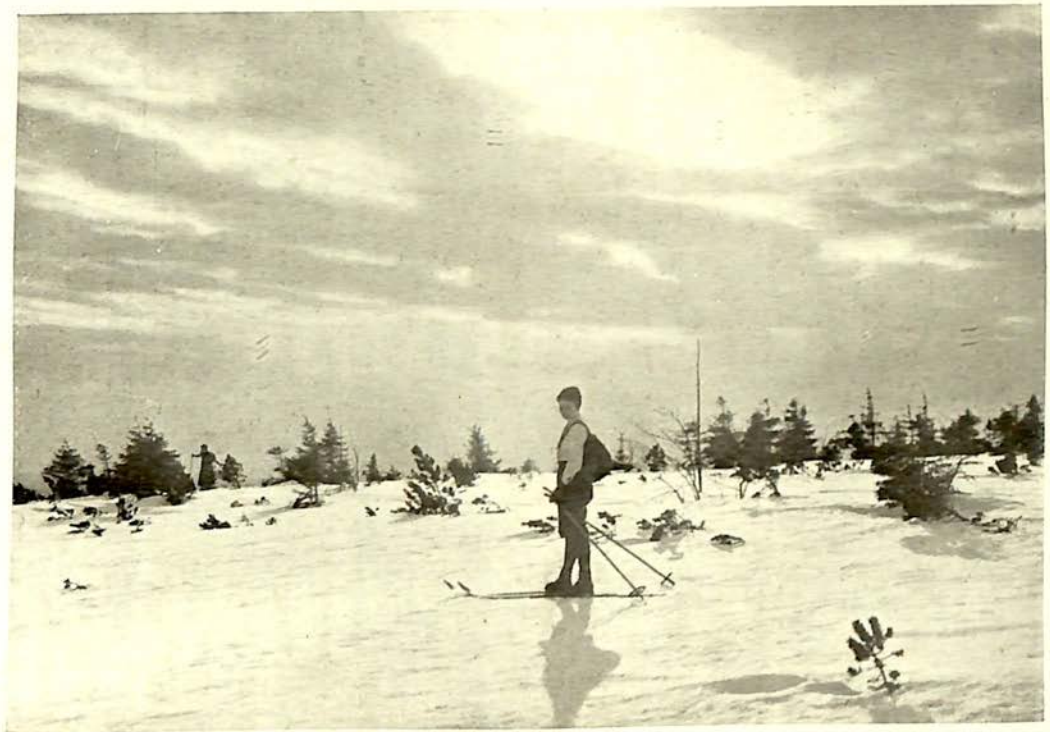
Always higher, through picturesque villages,

past lonely huts, ever deeper into the white forest! The snow lay piled up six feet deep on either side, the mighty fir trees hung their branches patiently beneath their burden, their little sisters lying at their foot, almost completely buried or peering out like quaint-shaped gnomes; long icicles hung from the rocks, over which, when the spring comes, the torrents will pour tumultuously down into the valley. A dead hush rested on the whole white world, only broken by the jingling of our bells as, like rude intruders, we passed on our way among the countless sleeping giants. The sky was still grey, and here and there as the road curved we plunged into thick banks of mist which obscured the valley already far beneath, but at last, as the Ruhestein Hotel hove in sight, the watching German eyes descried the first blue rift, and a few moments later the whole scene had changed. The mists parted, a brilliant sky threw into more perfect relief the unspotted whiteness of this suddenly revealed fairyland. We no longer walked on snow, we walked on diamonds, which flashed their tiny reflections back at the warm sunshine, the hanging icicles became glittering streaks of light, the whole peaceful lovely world shimmered in dazzling splendour. English Ignorance, open-mouthed, blissfully overwhelmed, stood on the doorstep of the hotel—a simple Black Forest Gasthaus—and scorned the thought of dinner. Fortunately German Wisdom prevailed, and having made a scanty toilette—it is not sporting to be too immaculate—we found ourselves at a long table with half a dozen other guests enjoying the country fare. As yet the hotel

was practically empty, for the chief guests were expected later on in the day. These came to stay for three or four nights in order to take part in the Ski-Kursus, paying for their board and instruction the large sum of four marks per diem. Not so fortunate—the one hundred and forty beds were already taken—we had to make the most of our time, and the meal no sooner over, we hurried out and began our sporting experiments. Nothing venture, nothing win! Emboldened by a successful flight down the toboggano run, we borrowed the necessary skis and started on the beginner's slope—after a certain amount of nervous preliminaries, for the first effort is like a leap into an unknown eternity. An instant's magnificent perpendicular amidst ironical "ohs" and "ahs" of admiration from German Wisdom, a sudden lurch, and the glory was at an end! I finished the career in a curious sitting posture, which I believe is unattainable even by the most proficient ski-runners. So much was tolerable, but, alas! the home-road had to be faced. One agonised step forward, an entirely unwished-for slide backwards, which flung me forward with a painful wrench at the ankles, a desperate plunge, volumes of advice from German Wisdom convulsed with laughter at the top of the bank.

"Why don't you dig your feet in sideways? Keep your knees together! You'll be up soon!"

A second German Wisdom on skis offered to come down and help me, to which I retorted, I fear, without the necessary politeness. I have found there is nothing which can make a human being so



SKI-TOURING.

furious as trying to get up a steep slope on a pair of skis, especially for the first time, and on that account I trust my abruptness was forgiven. At last I reached the top, thanks to the discovery that by sitting down and bumping yourself along with your hands you can attain a speed of something like a yard every five minutes. My hat over one ear, covered in snow, distinctly heated, in every sense of the word, I had then to listen to German Wisdom's observations.

"You have no idea how funny you looked! It was quite the most ridiculous sight I have ever seen. Do go down again! Don't you like it immensely?"

German Wisdom II. offered me thereupon a little instructive pamphlet, from which I learned that the chief thing is not to fall down.

"I shall try again in a minute," I said, with dignity. "Only give me time!"

I then looked about me, whilst German Wisdom sailed away gracefully and with the most irritating ease. It was altogether rather trying for poor English Arrogance, accustomed to excel in all matters sporting, to see the much-despised German people, who are no good at tennis or football, and have no understanding for cricket, performing the most wonderful feats on the unmanageable slender planks. It was insult to injury when a stout matron clambered calmly and without effort up the slope which had brought English Arrogance to so humiliating a fall, when, in fact, everybody could perform what seemed an impossibility. I tried again, I tried until tea-time, when the first shadows of evening began to creep over the snow, and I, wet through

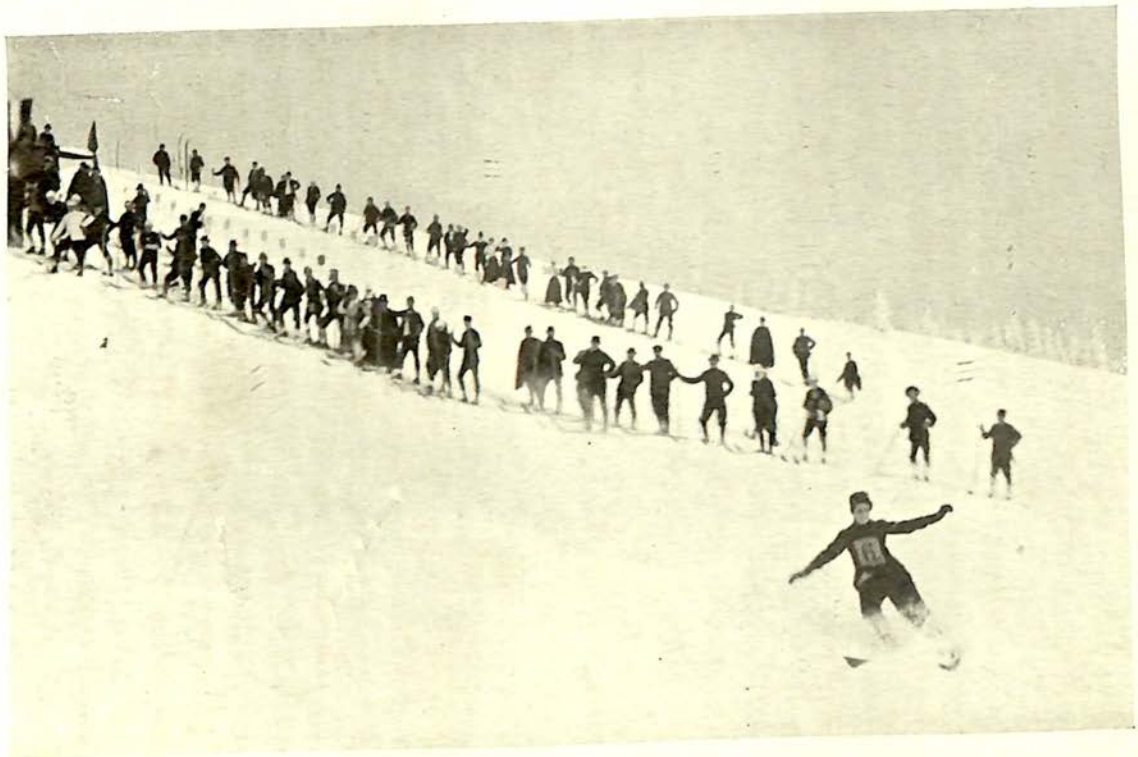
and weary but by no means conquered, returned my skis to the rightful owner.

"If you come every week for a year or two you might be able to manage quite nicely," he said condescendingly. "The great thing is not to fall down."

German Wisdom offered consolation.

"We will toboggan together back to the valley," she said. "Then you will know what it is to live."

No sooner suggested than weariness fled. The others packed themselves into the waiting sleigh, but we dragged our toboggano to the top of the ski-path, and with German Wisdom at the helm began the descent. It had taken us two hours to climb the mountain—we reached the village in a quarter of an hour. I do not know how fast we went or indeed what happened. I was only conscious of flying through the crisp, keen air, swerving round sharp corners, past ski-laüfers on their way up to the hotel, into grey mists with the flakes of snow flying in our faces, out on to the high road, and still on till the village and an uncomfortable grating told us that it was all over. A wonderful, never-to-be-forgotten quarter of an hour! Regretfully we walked back to meet the sleigh, and hitching it on behind allowed ourselves to be bumped through the thin snow to the station. Down in the valley a thaw had set in, and long before we reached the destination our ride had become distinctly unpleasant, but on such occasions the unpleasant counts for nothing against the pleasures which one has had in such generous quantities. Not even the train journey, not even the aching limbs and soaking



LADIES SKI RACE. THE WINNER.

clothes could reduce our spirits or mar our recollections. We had been sixteen hours *en route*, and were proud of our energy and endurance. It was this pride which led me to consider the four Germans who belonged to our party in a new and more respectful light. None of them could play tennis or hockey or cricket—I had regarded them hitherto as utterly unsporting people—but they had borne the fatigue better than I had done, and they had certainly understood a form of sport which required as much energy and skill as any of my favourite games. I could no longer say that they were "unsporting," and yet—— Considerably puzzled, with all my pet theories thrown into confusion, as is the fate of most theories, I turned to German Wisdom for a solution.

"We like sport," she explained pertinently, "but we do not care for games."

Voilà! You have the whole German attitude in a nutshell. This simple statement explains, for instance, why most young people do not care in the least for tennis—or, at any rate, only pretend to. It is true that in Karlsruhe there are dozens of tennis-courts, all in possession of the various tennis-Kränzchen, but they are simply means to an end. Out of ten, perhaps one player has an idea of the game—the rest play anyhow, and in any attire—most probably in their everyday clothes—and the tennis-racquet is no more than an excuse, a sort of unobtrusive chaperon who allows Hans to accompany Gretel home through the wood without anybody's sense of decorum being mortally wounded. It is true, also, that there are numberless clubs where a good player

is occasionally to be found, but the latter is an exception, and in six years I have only met one girl who could play averagely well, and she was from Baden-Baden! In the latter town, indeed everywhere where the foreign element is largely represented, the so-called sporting people are more plentiful. The German is a clever parrot in such matters, and very quick to pick up foreign ways and customs—perhaps too quick. Hence in North Germany and in all watering-places it is possible to obtain first-class tennis—in fact our champions will very soon have to look to their laurels in this respect—but in ordinary towns and amongst genuine Germans the love for tennis and all such forms of physical amusement is artificial in the extreme. They play because it is the fashion, and, above all, because it is an excuse for coming together. Other games, such as hockey and football, are altogether tabooed by the better classes as violent and brutal. There are three football clubs in Karlsruhe, two of which have well-trained and capable teams, but they are made up of men from the lower ranks, and the crowd which pours out on Sunday to watch the matches consists of shop-keepers, small officials, clerks, and so on. In vain royalty has bestowed its patronage on every form of sport; in vain the commanders of cadet schools, the principals of colleges, have endeavoured by persuasion and force to bring the German youth to play football and cricket. Do what they will, they can only obtain a reluctant obedience, and as soon as the compulsion is at an end the German flings both games aside, together with other equally objectionable school

A MILITARY HUNT

duties. In the girls' schools it is the same. Tennis is played after a fashion, but that is the only concession which the most sporting and determined English governess can obtain from her pupils. In after life they keep up this one game, but nothing short of violence will get them to indulge in hockey, let alone cricket, which latter everybody thinks extremely dull. During the present winter an heroic and international person tried to get up a ladies' hockey-club, and actually succeeded in wheedling five German and six English ladies to help in the attempt. The Germans paid their subscriptions, came once, and—never came again. As a team cannot exist on six members, the English party also dropped away, and the effort had to be abandoned.

The aristocracy, who set the fashion in such matters, take very small part in sport beyond racing and hunting. In North Germany there is a certain amount of polo, and a select circle goes in for tennis in style, but it is only a select circle. The mass remain either entirely indifferent or pick up a rudimentary idea of that one recognised game, because it is a social convenience. The consequences are, naturally, far from brilliant, and sometimes absurd. No doubt matters have improved. When I first came here, for instance, the officers played bat and ball—so-called tennis—in their uniforms, and it was quite usual for a civilian to run about a court in a tweed suit and a bowler hat. This year I have noticed a striking predominance of flannels, and a gratifying attempt at style. But the fatal fact still remains, that the real love of the thing, the need of it, does not exist. Perhaps it is

just as well. Chacun à son gout and the German has no real need for sport, or at any rate *our* form of sport. Whatever educational or physical disadvantages his indifference to games might entail is atoned for by gymnastics, his military service, and the form of sport which *he* enjoys. The German is devoted to all kinds of exercise which are in direct connection with nature, with outdoor life. The man who sees no pleasure in being cooped up in a tennis-court or in a football field will travel miles on skis through the forests, skate every free minute of his day, and in the heat of the summer undertake long walking or mountaineering tours. In this respect one must not judge by the specimens to be met with in fashionable hotels in the height of the season. There are lazy Germans as there are lazy people of all nations, and the energetic Teuton does not frequent fashionable hotels. He chooses out less-known places, and "roughs it" to his heart's content.

At his own particular sports the German is a first-class man, and even the German woman, who seems at first sight a hopeless case, can develop an energy which is simply astonishing. Every German girl can skate well, most are good swimmers and walkers, and proficient in winter sports. Many of my girl acquaintances, for instance, whose tennis has reduced me to pity and distraction, spend three or four weeks of the winter in the Black Forest ski-ing or tobogganing. They then show a common sense, a sporting spirit, which seems to desert them the moment they touch an imported game. They dress correctly and sensibly, either in short skirts or even in knickerbockers and jerseys; they take part

in the races, often make remarkable records, and display at all times a nerve and endurance altogether bewildering for those who have only seen them in their town life. It is only when you ask them to play games that they fail—chiefly, I think, because they do not want to succeed. This point reveals a rather interesting trait in the German character—a lack of competitiveness, an indifference to a success whose only value is the defeat of some one else. In school a boy works hard, not for the prize—as a rule there is none—or because he wants to do better than a comrade, but because he sees a distinct personal value in knowledge—he learns, in fact, for learning's sake. In after life he conducts his business on the same principle. He works tenaciously because work is his life, and because he sees its distinct utility, but he is not inspired by a genuine competitive instinct. If he does better than other people, it is simply the result of a natural law which makes it impossible for everybody to do equally well—his success, therefore, gives him no particular satisfaction. His attitude towards sport is quite in keeping.

"And suppose I *do* run myself hot and tired over a ridiculous patch of ground after a ridiculous ball, and suppose I *do* win a game, what good will it do me?" he asks.

"You will have had splendid exercise," says the Englishman.

"Yes; but if I want exercise I would rather go for a walk through the forest or make a bicycling tour. Then I should perhaps learn something at the same time—at any rate, I should be enjoying nature."

"But then there would be no game!" retorts the Englishman.

"No game? What is the good of a game? Am I wiser or better if I beat you at tennis?"

"No, but the fun of it——"

"I don't see any fun in beating somebody at something which has no value. That is childish and waste of time."

A German military hunt is another instance of this characteristic dislike for or indifference to competition in any form. There are no foxes in this part of the world, so a make-believe quarry in the shape of a soldier on horseback dragging a piece of raw meat behind him is substituted. The hunt is usually conducted over hedges and ditches of considerable difficulty, but no one cares in the least who gets in at the "kill," and the pace set by the Master is usually decidedly "gemütlich." The fact is that the mere catching of the "fox" has no interest for the hunters, who have simply come for the riding's sake, and consequently take matters most calmly. On the other hand, any form of sport which is in direct connection with his work excites the officer to instant enthusiasm. At the yearly Campagne Reiten—an exhibition of horsemanship for all the different cavalry regiments in the Baden Army Corps—I have witnessed some really brilliant riding, and have been struck by the unusual interest and enthusiasm displayed. Each man is then strung up to his best, and the beautiful horses, the slight elastic figures in the gay uniforms, the daring feats down breakneck sandbanks and over impossible-looking water-jumps, form a picture of always fresh attraction.

CAMPAGNE-REITEN.

In this case there are prizes, but I do not fancy that they are the spurs which urge every competitor to his greatest efforts. They seemed to be regarded as matters of comparatively little account compared to the standard of excellency which the winners have attained. Each man does his best because it is essential for him, as a soldier, to prove his proficiency, not for the prize and not for the gratification of doing better than a comrade. It may be that they cared more for their silver cups than they showed, but that was the impression I received. In sport, as in everything, there are, of course, exceptions. There is the cup-hunter, and the man who, when he loses a game, loses his temper with it. He exists in Germany, but in small numbers, and the latter type is rarest of all. As a rule the German is too indifferent to care whether he wins or not, and only gets annoyed when too sharply criticised by his partner. It is not wise to tell your German partner in a tennis-tournament that he is not playing well, or in any way show your annoyance at his performance. As I have said before, he is very sensitive, and the criticism will wound him deeply and reduce his skill to vanishing point. On the other hand, a little praise—however unmerited—will encourage him to the finest efforts, and he will repay you by an admiration for prowess and a consideration for *your* blunders which is quite sincere, since it is the expression of his genuine gratitude.

I might mention in conclusion the absolute indifference of young Germany to all card games. Even the officers, who, in their long evenings together, are often hard put to it to find a new form of amuse-

ment, remain very phlegmatic devotees. I knew one young lieutenant—he had an English mother, which perhaps accounted for his tastes—who was passionately fond of bridge, but in spite of all his efforts he could get no one to play with him. Out of sheer pity we used to arrange bridge evenings for him, and his joy was quite pathetic.

"They all hate it," he used to complain bitterly; "and most of them won't even try to learn."

As a matter of fact, only thorough-paced gamblers and old people play cards in Germany. The latter have nothing else to occupy them, and on that account are excused, but the sight of a party of young girls and men sitting down to an evening's bridge would reduce a pure-blooded German to a state of grave bewilderment. He would not be particularly shocked. He would simply ask, "Why do they do it? Why do they like it? That is an occupation for those who have not the strength to do anything else."

It is not, as I have said before, that the Germans cannot play—they do not want to. My German friend, for instance, is a first-class bridge player, having picked it up in England with remarkable rapidity, but only when driven by sheer good-nature will she consent to take a hand. Other Germans simply refuse to learn.

"I will do anything else you like," one said to me, on my having offered myself as an obliging instructor in a selection of English games. "I will read and talk French within the house; I will go out riding, sketching, touring, skating with you when

the weather permits, but my life is too short to waste it on games."

Her one exception is chess, which as a game of pure intellect is "allowed," and appreciated by most Germans. For the rest, her attitude towards the usual English indoor and outdoor amusements is typical. It misleads the Englishman to the idea that the German is physically idle and wholly unsporting—which is not really the case. "Sport, but not games!" is their motto, and perhaps they are not so far wrong after all. They are, at anyrate, saved from the dangerous exaggeration which is threatening English athletics, and indeed English progress.

CHAPTER XII

MANNERS MAKETH MAN

"IF you are in England and are in any difficulty as regards etiquette, there is one rule to which you can always trust," a German lady once remarked to me: "Do just the opposite to what you would do in any other civilised country, and you are bound to do right."

I thought this statement over, and confessed that it was not unfounded. I admitted that, as in measures, money, and laws, so in manners, we have always been the exceptions; but I hastened to add, with true English modesty, that if she considered the matter she would find that our exceptions were usually wise and proper ones.

"You are like the mother of a recruit who came home from the parade and told her friends that her son was the only man in the regiment who had been in step!" she retorted crushingly. "Exceptional ideas and methods are by no means always right, and are very often merely the obstinate endeavours of people who are trying to be original," I protested, and she thereupon went on with some heat—it was evident that she had had some unpleasant experiences in England.

"No one would object to your having your

own ways of doing things, if only you would not insist that they were the only right ones. You are perfectly at liberty to eat as you like, bow as you like, visit as you like, but please don't measure us by your standards, which we do not even recognise as standards."

No doubt there was some justice in her indignant protest. English people *have* their own particular ways, and they have, in addition, the fond belief that they are the providentially appointed criterions in all matters whatsoever, but more especially in the matters of manners, and that therefore anybody who transgresses against their code is of necessity mannerless. The German is more just and less arrogant.

"If I went to England everybody would believe that I was ill-bred because I do not put my knife and fork together as you do," one old gentleman said to me; "but you will observe that I do not say that your men are ill-mannered when they go into a shop with their hats on, ignore my greeting at a hotel *table d'hôte*, shake my wife's hand pump-handle fashion, with possibly the other hand in their pocket, and lift their hat a fourth of an inch when they meet her on the street. If they were Germans, I should say that they were not gentlemen; but since they are English, I say to myself that they have other ways, and withhold all criticism. But you English only recognise one very arbitrary standard of your own."

Here, again, I think there was some truth in the accusation. Certain it is that after a prolonged sojourn amongst the German people, one discovers that though they do not conform to our ways they

have a code of their own whose strictness often makes the English fashion appear somewhat slovenly and disrespectful. Yet it is extraordinary how narrow-minded people can be on this subject. I know an English lady who still insists on it that Germans are rude because the men bow first, because the new-comer has to call first, because they have other and less stringent table manners. It is vain to argue with such people that the laws we have made on this point are purely arbitrary, and that there is no real reason why one way of arranging one's knife and fork is better than another. They hold to it that Germans are "disgusting," and look the other way when they see an Englishman bolting his food like a starved wolf. In truth, as soon as the traveller has cleared his mind of his national prejudices, he must recognise the fact that he is no better than his German cousin, and that in certain points he has even something to learn. Of course, it is very much a matter of taste, and to sit between an Englishman and a German and listen to their opinions on the subject of manners, is like sitting between the Irresistible and the Immovable and being badly jolted in the process. The Englishman thinks it ridiculous when the German sweeps his hat off to the ground to a masculine acquaintance, kisses a lady's hand, bows deeply with his heels clapped firmly together, shakes hands after dinner. "Did you ever see anything so stiff and absurd?" he asks you. On the other side, the German, though he makes generous allowances for custom, finds the English manner far too abrupt and casual. His criticism is especially directed against the English-

man, and augments in severity according to his own social position. "The higher the birth the more ceremonious the manners," is a safe rule to judge by. The aristocrat clings tenaciously to the old forms, whereas in other classes, and, above all, among the merchant and business people, there is a tendency to pick up English ways and to throw off what they call the ridiculous old "Zöpfe." Perhaps they are ridiculous for unaccustomed eyes, but when they are left out one misses them, and a German who comes up and shakes hands with me with English freedom always gives me a shock. It is not that I dislike the English freedom, but when a German imitates it he loses something of his individuality. The average German, just as he is a poetic dreamer in spite of his practical abilities, has still amongst his up-to-date notions a little of the old-world chivalry, which one cherishes gratefully as the remnants from a more romantic age. Between that age and the present the aristocrat forms the connecting link. He has been brought up on the great past; his ancestors, his old name, have been held constantly before him, and their influence extends over his whole life, making of his ideas and of his manners a curious mixture of the modern and of the old-fashioned. Moreover, he is brought up in a severe school. From his childish days he has been taught to stand in his father's presence, to kiss his mother's hand, to treat her and all women with an unfailing, if somewhat formal, courtesy. He is usually kept at home until the later years of his boyhood, and so has no opportunity to develop the rough-and-tumble manners of the public

school boy. This home-life accounts to a great extent for the ease and self-possession with which the average German youth carries himself through a social function. He does not stumble over his own feet, choke over his tea, stammer when he speaks, or—what is worse—maintain a sulky silence. He is courteous, simple, and natural, without being priggish or unboyish. I think this lack of self-consciousness must be part of the German character, for even boys who *have* been brought up away from home, and who scarcely see a woman from year's end to year's end, display a natural *savoir faire* on unusual occasions which is surprising. Thus I have a pleasant recollection of an evening spent at the Cadet school here, where a dance was being given in honour of the Emperor's birthday. There were one hundred and fifty cadets present of all sizes and of all ages, from absurd little mites of ten years old to tall young fellows of fifteen and thereabouts, who were preparing to go up to Grosslichterfelde for their concluding years. I knew something of their life, and knew that it was a strenuous Spartan existence, in which polish and refinement might all too easily be forgotten; but from the mite of ten, who, with a profound bow, engaged me for a waltz and swept me off—perhaps, more correctly, was swept off—with great pride, to the eldest cadet, who never allowed the conversation to flag an instant, they all behaved with the ease of complete self-forgetfulness. They were sincerely glad to dance with you, sincerely grateful that you had come, sincerely anxious to please. There was no affectation or conceit about them; their conversation was all

that a boy's should be—a vivid description of a rat-hunt remains in my memory—and behind their courtly manners, their little formalities, there was a heart politeness, a simplicity of character, which took away all stiffness from the formality and made it a living courtesy. I hereby admit, without more ado, that I find German manners charming. Perhaps I have grown accustomed to them, perhaps I have grown to understand the character which is their source. I like the courteous greeting which strangers exchange when chance brings them together. No matter whether you meet a German in a railway carriage, in a consulting-room, or at a *table d'hôte*, he will always greet you, and there is something in this recognition of your existence, in this tacit acknowledgment that you are a human being like himself, which gives the "Universal Brotherhood of Man" a touch of reality. These little touches, these little formalities—peculiar, I must observe, to the South German—are the more pleasing because they are the sincere expression of a sincere feeling. One has to learn to believe in this sincerity. When I first came to Germany I thought the courtly attention which men showed to women, the hand-kissing, bowing, and so on, a hollow mockery, a kind of sweetmeat offered instead of a genuine respect, but since then I have learnt to think differently. The German has not only been taught the outer courtesies, but he has been born with a kindness of heart and instinctive consideration for others which makes them of real value. The man who appears to have a fund of "small change" and valueless attentions, is the same man who will go miles out

of his way for you to-morrow. English people are so accustomed to look upon a certain brusquerie as a sign of sincerity, and a high degree of polish as a sign of humbug, that it is very difficult, even after many years, to get accustomed to the German fashion. Only a few weeks ago I was travelling in the same tram with a young lieutenant, whose smooth and graceful manners had more than once aroused suspicion in my English soul. He was got up in his newest and finest uniform—we were both on our way to a military funeral, I remember—he had on spotless white kid gloves, an eye-glass thrust in his eye; he looked, in fact, the veriest dandy, who would not have soiled himself to save a life. The tram was very full, and presently an old peasant fellow came in with his basket of vegetables and looked about helplessly, treading on everybody's toes in the meantime. I looked on my military acquaintance and waited for the storm. The dandy rose, saluted gravely, offered the old peasant his seat, and went and stood outside. If there is anything in thought telegraphy, that young officer must have heard me apologising to him all the rest of our journey together. This is only one example of the many which I will not cite, for fear of being unnecessarily tiresome. I only assert that you can enjoy German courtesy with an easy mind—it is genuine.

Hitherto I have spoken chiefly of the aristocratic classes; the bourgeois is not less courteous, he is only a shade less polished. Being bound by no tradition, his manners vary with every family. Some are inclined to be too "devot," too persistent

with their bob-curtsies and hand-kissing, others too negligent, but one feature is common to them all, and indeed to all Germans—the respect and deference with which older people are treated. It is one of the most pleasing features of German life. Although from what I have seen I believe the relations between parents and children to be far smoother in Germany than in England, one hears nothing of the careless and sometimes disrespectful conduct which shocks the German on his visit to my country. German people know that intimacy breeds contempt, and that from the moment outward courtesies and attentions are neglected all true respect is at an end, and they take care, therefore, that courtesy shall be an indispensable ingredient in their children's attitude towards themselves and others. Thus a German girl in the presence of her elder is never clumsy, rude, or abrupt. She is always at hand with some little attention or kindness, and though one may laugh at her "Knix," one cannot but admire the education which has taught her so much respect and consideration for others. Fortunately, it is not all education. If you go among the lower classes you will find the same good nature, the same willingness to oblige, the same refinement of feeling, which is the root of all German politeness. No South German peasant will pass you on the road without his "Tag!" or "Grüss Gott!" and here again the ceremonial covers a genuine friendliness. It has been more than once my fate during long bicycling tours to find myself stranded on the wayside with a punctured tyre or a damaged gear-case, and on each occasion a labourer has left his

work and planted himself down to the repair with an energy and patience which atoned for all lack of skill. One young yokel even rode to the neighbouring town to buy a new inner tyre for me, and as the latter had exhausted my funds I could offer him nothing for reward but my promise that if he would give me his address he would hear of "something to his advantage." He shook his head with cheery good-nature.

"Ach, was, das macht nix, Fraülein," he said as he went off; "Das macht nix!"

So I have always found the German, from the lowest to the highest, kindly, willing, considerate. Even the servants are polite. If they have not been deliberately brought up to be familiar by the familiarity of their mistress, they are usually very respectful, and in the worst case look upon themselves as members of the family. Certainly they do not look down upon you as inferior beings whom Providence has entrusted to their good-natured care and pity. As I have said, one class is more polished than another, one class more for formality, one class possessed with a foolish craze for foreign ways, but at the bottom they are all the same. They are all actuated by the same extreme sensitiveness as regards their own and other people's feelings. Hence they are always warmly grateful for the smallest kindnesses, always enthusiastic, always careful with their criticism, always considerate for the weak spots in others. They do as they would be done by. It may be that they carry their form of politeness too far, praising and admiring and thanking to an exaggerated degree, which the Englishman

understands as little as the German understands his reserve and coldness. But it is an unconscious error. They do not mean to flatter or to say more or less than is true, they simply shrink instinctively from saying what they themselves would not care to hear. Naturally there are rude and disagreeable Germans—it has not been my fate to meet them, but I have no doubt they exist, since no nation is perfect—but the average German neither eats with his knife, nor pushes you off the pavement, nor treads on your toes actually or figuratively, nor helps himself to the best of everything going. He is, in the first place, far too good-natured; and, in the second, usually indifferent to outward matters, he lays great stress on his code of manners. It is not our code, and like every code—even our own—it has its absurdities, its failings, and its many contradictions. On the one side you will often find formality confronted with a certain informality, a certain abruptness, which startle you, and then absurdities which will amuse you until you have got accustomed to them. There is, for instance, no particular reason why the centre of the sofa should be the place of honour for the visitor—on the contrary, I have always found the sofa most uncomfortable; but then there is no reason why it should be more well-bred to put one's knife and fork together when finished than to leave them in any other position. On such trivial points it is only a matter of taste and custom, and he who cannot get over such little differences had better stay at his native hearth. Where genuine heart politeness and good breeding is concerned, the German is

equal to the best, and if his sensitiveness is respected there is no pleasanter person in the world to live with, no one more kindly or more courteous. Only it is not wise to laugh at his ways simply because they are different to what one is accustomed to. It is always irritating to be laughed at, and it prevents all true understanding and appreciation. With a little sympathy it is easy to get accustomed to the unaccustomed, and to find its meaning. For there is always a meaning if one chooses to look for it, and the German meaning is sure to be like himself, good and kindly, with a dash of the *chevaleresque* and the poetic about it to relieve it from the dull grey of our prosaic modern life.

CHAPTER XIII

MARRIAGE—BEFORE AND AFTER

IN my German year there are many marriages, and if there is one thing more than another which reminds me that the German years are passing, it is the way in which young Backfische, with their hair coiled in neat plaits over their ears, develop suddenly into young ladies, and then with equal suddenness bestow upon you a huge double sheet of printed paper, on one side of which Herr S. (title) and Frau S. (*née* Z.) give themselves the honour of announcing the betrothal of their daughter Elsa with Herr K. (title), and on the other side of which Herr K. gives himself the honour of announcing his betrothal with Elsa, daughter of Herr S. (title) and Frau S. (*née* Z.). You then open your eyes, murmur "Fancy," send round the customary bouquet of flowers to the bride, and put the matter out of your mind for the year or six months, during which time the couple must wait in patience; or if you remember the happy event, it will only be when you meet them on the street arm in arm, the picture of Gemütlichkeit, and openly acknowledged devotion. Sometimes your surprise over certain engagements appears really justified. As I have said before, a girl in Germany must be a deformity and a pauper combined, not to be able to find a husband if

she wants to; and more than once I have been bewildered by the brilliant matches which the most dowdy and impossible-looking have been able to bring about under their mother's skilful generalship. For the men in Germany do not marry—they are married; they are more or less passive articles of sale, which stand in rows in the matrimonial shop-window with their price labelled in large letters in their buttonhole, waiting patiently for a purchaser. They are perfectly willing, even eager, victims; they want to be bought, but their position does not allow them to grasp the initiative, and they are thankful when at last someone comes along and declares herself capable and willing to pay the price. This may seem exaggerated, and there are always the exceptions to be reckoned with, but it is true in the rule, and in every social circle, however low or high. The girl and her mother, with their purse in hand, pass the articles in review, and choose out the one which best suits their means and fancy.

"I shall marry an officer," one girl told me some time ago, with the easy confidence of a person about to order a new dress; and lo and behold, before the year was out she was walking proudly on the arm of a dragoon lieutenant. I even know of three women who swore to each other that they would only marry geniuses, and here also they had their will. One married a great painter, one a poet, and another a famous diplomatist. That they were all three peculiarly unhappy is not a witness against the system, but a proof that geniuses may—occasionally—be very uncomfortable partners. In this case the purchasers were rich and what is called "gefeiette Mädchen"—that is

to say, popular—and could therefore make their choice. Others of lesser means would have had to content themselves with an officer, cavalry or infantry, according to the "dot"—or a lawyer, or a doctor, or a merchant, and so on down the scale. A pretty and charming girl *can* find her partner without any other perquisites than her face and her charms, but her choice becomes at once more limited, for the men who can afford to marry a penniless wife are too few in number and too scattered. Hence marriages in Germany have in most cases a practical side, though they in no way resemble the French *mariages de convenance.* A young man in the marriagable age—in Germany, from twenty-three onwards to thirty-five—is rarely in a position to set up housekeeping unless he receives support either from his own father or from the family of his wife. Should he have chosen a State or professional career, his income will not be sufficient until he is at least thirty-three, and an unmarried man of thirty-three in Germany is a man who has been a considerable time on the shelf. The officer is even worse off. At no time in his life is he in the position to support a family on his pay alone. All the support he gets from home is needed to fill up the gaps in his own personal existence, and only one man in a hundred is able to put the financial side of the question quite out of sight. It is not that the German is a fortune-hunter—he simply cannot help himself. I know one lieutenant who was desperately attached to a girl belonging to an aristocratic but impoverished family. As is usual, he went first to the parents to ask their permission to propose to her—or rather to ask if they could afford him as a son-in-law.

They named a yearly allowance which he knew to be insufficient, and he immediately retired without ever speaking to the object of his hopes. In another similar case the girl's family offered to make every possible sacrifice in order to give her the husband she wished for, but this time it was the girl who refused to buy her happiness at so high a price. In both instances, neither of the parties have married, though they could have made brilliant matches had they wished it.

Even young men of well-to-do families are scarcely if ever able to marry without the financial support of their wives' people. The reason is clear and perfectly just. We will suppose a father with moderate means with a family of two daughters and a son. He takes from his fortune a certain sum—as much as he can afford—and divides it equally into three parts. The ordinary education of his children is now at an end. He takes the son's share of the money and spends it on his maintenance and training during the long years which must pass before a professional man becomes self-supporting. Should the son come to him during his apprenticeship with the plea that he wishes to marry, he at once asks who the girl is, and if her family is in a position to support the new *ménage*. The reply being in the negative, the father produces his son's educational bills and lays them before him, with the remark—

"This represents your share of my wealth; what remains belongs to your sisters."

Should the sisters—as sometimes happens—choose to spend their dowry in a continuation of their education, they are usually at liberty to do so, but

unless the family be very wealthy, they must expect no more help when the marriage question appears on the horizon. As a rule, however, the girl who wants to marry stays at home and reserves her share, so that when the right man comes she will be able to marry him. At first sight this system has an ugly look, and suggests nothing but the most distasteful *mariages de convenance*. One imagines young men up to their necks in debt pursuing every rich heiress that crosses their path; one imagines the sad plight of a girl who feels that the man she loves is at the bottom only seeking her money; but, as a matter of fact, the conditions exist no more in Germany than in England.

"I cannot marry a wife without money, but I will not marry her for her money," is the clear and definite standpoint of most German men, and they prove their sincerity. A short time ago Karlsruhe society was adorned by a very rich but unattractive daughter of a very obviously self-made man. It was clear that she was "doing the season" with the idea of picking up some penniless young noble or officer, and indeed one would have supposed the temptation irresistible. The mother of an officer, renowned for his pecuniary difficulties, hinted gently that this was the opportunity of his life, and that he should make haste before this gold-fish was caught by some more enterprising fisher. Her son shrugged his shoulders.

"We may want money badly enough," he said, "but there are some things we can't swallow. There isn't one of us who would marry Fraülein R. just for her money's sake."

Such indeed proved to be the case. Fraülein R.

returned to her home without her noble fiancé, and had to content herself with a husband of her own origin. Had she been other than she was, cultured, intelligent, or lovable, she would have had the whole eligible contingent at her feet, but her money alone was not sufficient attraction—not even for the most desperate fortune-hunter.

"Das Herz muss auch mitsprechen," as one of the latter informed an elderly and motherly friend.

The explanation for this phenomenon is to be found in the German temperament. The average Teuton loves his home, and his greatest ambition is to build up a family in whose bosom he can always find comfort, support, and love. A gilded domestic misery is not to his taste. He is too easy-going, too indifferent to luxury, too much of a Gemütsmensch to sacrifice his ideals for the sake of wealth and splendour. If he can have a grand house and horses and carriages, as well as the woman of his choice, so much the better, but the house and all the pertaining luxuries are secondary considerations. If he can afford to live in moderate comfort—very moderate for our ideas—he is equally happy. That is all he asks of life, or rather of his wife's parents. No doubt money gilds over many defects, and the wealthy, less attractive girl in Germany has more chance than her poorer, more attractive sister, but her money is not irresistible, and if she chooses a man who takes her solely for her wealth it is entirely her own fault. Sometimes her fortune is the primary attraction—the gild is there—but she will always be able to find a suitor who will do his utmost to fall genuinely in love with her, and who genuinely

succeeds. A loveless marriage in Germany is the exception, and the exception is despised. As a rule, a match is made up of real affection and a moderate portion of practical considerations.

The financial side of the case explains the custom of first appealing to the parents before speaking to the girl. Naturally the girl knows well enough whither matters are tending, but no doubt she suffers many anxious moments of suspense. An amusing illustration reoccurs to me as I write, relating to a young pair whom the world had for a long time looked upon as "settled." They were always together, his attentions were very obviously intentions, but somehow or other he never—as it is vulgarly described—came to the point. The girl was distracted with uncertainty, until one day her parents returned from America after a long voyage. The same hour that they landed in Bremen the young cavalier packed his trunks and went to meet them, received their blessing—and the promise of the dowry—returned by the next train, and laid his hand and heart at his Penelope's feet. Whereupon she flung herself into his arms with the exclamation, "Endlich, du Sheusal!" ("At last, you horror!"). Which form of acceptance, if unusual, was distinctly satisfactory.

I said at the beginning of the chapter that the men were more married than marrying, and I have based this conclusion on my observations and on a remark which a German lady once made to me.

"An average girl can always get the man she wants," she said, "as long as she does not want something too grand or too expensive."

I think she was right. We will take the case of a Fraülein S., the daughter of a lawyer of good standing and moderate means. In her particular social circle she is not likely to meet any one beyond her reach. The young barristers who are invited to her father's house are all more or less eligible suitors, and she needs only to make her choice and her mother does the rest. Dinner parties, tennis parties, dances, picnics, etc.—they are all means to an end. With the slightest encouragement on the girl's part matters march rapidly forward. Twenty years ago a young couple were never left an instant to themselves until they were actually married. Nowadays the painful etiquette has been relaxed, and the task of marrying thereby simplified. With a tennis racquette in her hand, Fraülein S. is at liberty to wander in a solitude *à deux* through the loneliest parts of the forest without any one being shocked or surprised. She can even go for days up into the mountains for sport without a chaperone, and how many matches ski-tours have brought about I should not like to say. The ball-room, in fact, has sunk out of sight as a matrimonial market. In the first place, it is bad form to dance more than twice with the same girl unless one is engaged; in the second place, sitting-out corners are unknown, so that the young man naturally feels that his chances are better out of doors, where his preference is not observed by a dozen pair of sharp watching eyes. Matters having reached a certain point, he then puts on his top-hat and frock-coat and calls on Fraülein S.'s father. He explains his prospects, and the father explains his daughter's. Should

both parties be satisfied the candidate proceeds on the path of victory in the usual way, and the huge notices are sent round to all friends and relations announcing the unlooked-for event. Once engaged, the young couple are free to do very much what they like, so long as they do it together. One meets them arm-in-arm at all times and at all places and without chaperone, but it is considered bad form for the girl to attend any sociabilities without her fiancé, and *vice versa.* If friends give a dance or a party, they have to invite both or neither—they must not and will not be separated. In the ordinary course of events, however, the girl drops out of public life during her engagement. She has so much to do and prepare that she has very little time for the amusements with which her disengaged sisters still occupy themselves. Even if she is well-to-do, and can afford to have her trousseau made for her, there are still a great many things which she prefers to make or superintend herself. The trousseau, may it be said *en passant,* does not consist of a hundred pairs of everything, as a misguided English lady once informed me. She explained the terrific number by the fact (!) that German people only send their clothes to the wash twice in the year, and must therefore have a large stock to keep them going in the meanwhile. This may have been the case fifty years ago, but in fifty years quite a number of things change, and, as far as I have seen, German people either manage the regular and normal weekly wash themselves, or send their things in the English fashion to the laundryman, at whom they grumble in a fashion altogether international. Hence the

bride's trousseau is quite a normal, if elaborate, one, for where lingerie is concerned the German woman is fastidious to a degree. It must be added, too, that she brings with her, as a matter of course, the whole household equipment. The linen, furniture, cooking utensils—in fact everything that is required for the new home—is supplied by the bride, or rather by her parents, and it is this part of the dot which falls heaviest on the paternal shoulders. I have known families who have denied themselves actual necessities in order that the marrying daughter might start life fittingly. Sometimes the result is tragic. I know, for instance, a widowed mother whose daughter became engaged to a reputed millionaire. Too proud to let her child enter such brilliant conditions in a poor and humble style, the mother spent the last penny of her fortune on the new home. A year later the millionaire was a bankrupt, and the old mother had to go out as a companion in order to keep husband and wife from actual starvation. Such catastrophes are all too frequent and all too inevitable in a country where family ties are so close, and the sacrifices demanded and made so great. Perhaps sacrifice is not the word —the German looks upon everything done for the family as a simple duty.

But to return to Fraülein S. and her preparations, which we will suppose have been completed without causing too heavy a drain on the paternal purse. At last dawns the marriage itself. The night before-hand is the Polter Abend, when all relations and friends are invited to a last grand merry-making, in which the bride and bridegroom play the leading

part. Dancing, amateur theatricals, little entertainments (usually with pointed reference to the engagement and pre-engagement days) fill up the evening hours. It is then that the chief presents are given, and it becomes the duty of the first of the three bridesmaids to present the bride with her myrtle-wreath—orange blossom is only used by the lower classes—whilst the second hands her the veil, and the third the handkerchief. In the Rhine Provinces there are only two bridesmaids, who escort the bridegroom to the altar, whilst the "best men" act as guard of honour to the bride, but this is a local custom, and in South Germany it is usual to have three bridesmaids, who, however, are not required to wear any particular costume. The Polter Abend is a remnant of the old custom of celebrating a wedding a week beforehand and a week afterwards—a business which, no doubt, proved too expensive and too exhausting. As it is, it adds considerably to the burden. I suppose in every country a wedding is a more or less trying business—especially for the bride; and in Germany, what with the Polter Abend and the actual ceremony, one would suppose that she would require a rest-cure at a sanatorium to get over it. In the first place there are the two ceremonies through which she must pass before the bond is made legal—the civil and the ecclesiastical. The latter can be omitted, but the better classes keep to it if only because it is considered good form. At eleven o'clock in the morning the bride is fetched by the bridegroom, and in company with her masculine relations repairs to the town hall, where the civil

ceremony is performed. On her return home the bride is hurried into her wedding dress, is once more fetched by the bridegroom, and the whole clan of relations and friends proceed to church. The costumes on this occasion strike the English eye as unusual. The men are in evening dress, except for those who have the right to wear a uniform, and who, of course, wear it. The feminine part of the congregation is at its smartest and finest, but there is no uniformity amongst the bridesmaids, who dress as suits them or their taste. The bride and bridegroom go to the altar together, and the ceremony, which is in all cases very simple, then proceeds. In Germany not only the woman but the man acknowledges his married state by a wedding-ring. The two rings are given to the bride and bridegroom by the clergyman, but neither are new, having previously served as engagement tokens worn on the third finger of the left hand, and afterwards transferred to the right hand. A short sermon follows, delivered from the altar, and addressed directly to the married pair. The text has been previously chosen by the bride and bridegroom, and is afterwards written in the Bible which is presented to them by the clergyman, no matter how rich or how poor they may be.

After the actual wedding the whole party returns to the bride's house, and then begins a festive meal which puts the German's powers of stoic, cheerful endurance to the test. It is a mighty meal, an awe-inspiring meal, a really awful meal. The clergyman—if he has not found a legitimate excuse for escaping—sits between the bride and bridegroom,

and makes a speech in their honour. Then the father of the bridegroom makes a speech in honour of the bride's family, and the father of the bride makes a speech in honour of the bridegroom's family, and then come the guests, the ladies, everybody *en fin*, till there is nothing left to toast except the wine itself. All this takes some hours—usually from three to seven—but no one shows any sign of fatigue, and the "Stimmung" rises from degree to degree, especially after the pointedly ignored departure of the bride and bridegroom. The evening is concluded with a dance, and if many guests are staying in the house, and the bride's mother has enough strength left, there is what is called a "Nach-Hochzeit," a second festivity the day afterwards. Thus a German wedding in the well-to-do circles is a mighty affair, and keeps the families of the contracting parties in close association for nearly a week. It is not to be wondered at that, what with the length of time and the general matrimonial "atmosphere," the saying that one wedding begets another is peculiarly true in Germany.

Among the lower classes weddings and funerals form the chief events of life, and both are very serious affairs. In earlier days it was the custom among the peasants for a specially appointed Jew to act as go-between among the families, and arrange for suitable marriages and doweries, picking up a nice little percentage for himself by the way. Nowadays his expensive services are dispensed with, and the peasant manages his business by himself. But it is a business, and the financial side of the question plays a very serious part. We have at present two

servants in the house who are on the eve of engagement with two soldier "friends"—Landsmänner from their own village—but there is a delay, for which we are only too thankful, because neither of the girls has saved sufficient to start the housekeeping. Nobody expects the man to have saved anything, but a servant girl who has not her fifty pounds in the bank is not considered possible, however devoted her suitor may be. He will be quite prepared to wait, and he will be faithful to her, but the money must be there before anything definite is settled. Perhaps he is right. At any rate, improvident and foolish marriages seem rarer here than elsewhere. So our two treasures are saving might and main, and I suppose before long we shall once more be on the search for other treasures. When the time comes their marriage will be a modified reproduction of the ceremony I have already described. Some time beforehand the couple will choose out their three-roomed flat and furnish it with the girl's savings, then one Saturday morning—it is always a Saturday on account of the Sunday holiday—the bridegroom, resplendent in frock-coat and top-hat, will arrive and fetch the bride, who has adorned herself in a new black dress with a white veil and orange blossom. The black dress is sometimes exchanged for white, but this only happens amongst those who wish to make an effect at all costs—the pretentious folk, who care more for show and finery than utility. The couple then drive in a hired carriage and pair to the town hall for the civil ceremony, and then on to church. Afterwards they enjoy a ponderous, melancholy

meal, repair to the Stadtgarten for the afternoon, enjoy a day's respite, and then—life goes on as usual.

A genuine peasant wedding is arranged on much the same principle, only more weight is laid on family, position, etc. No peasant will allow his daughter or son to marry out of the "Circle" or into a poorer family, and the ceremony is simply the seal on a fair bargain between two business people and their firms. The other day, on a tour through the Black Forest, I had the good fortune to witness just such a wedding. The couple had apparently passed through the civil ceremony, for when I arrived on the scene the whole cortège was on their way to the little village church, the bride and bridegroom, magnificent in their picturesque "Tracht," leading the way, followed by every friend and relation who could be mustered for the occasion. The Black Forester is a sombre, melancholy person, and the procession might just as well have been a funeral, except for the bright colours and glistening silver ornaments with which the women's dresses were adorned. After the marriage service, which was held in the broadest dialect, the whole party retired into the Gasthaus, where a great dinner had been ordered. It must have cost the host a good portion of his hard-earned savings—it may even have cost him a good deal more than he could afford—and nobody seemed to enjoy it in the least. Very indiscreetly we peeped through the glass doors. The bride and bridegroom sat at the centre of the table like two depressed wooden dolls, and as far as we could make out nobody smiled or spoke during the whole performance. At intervals

the village string band filled up the silences with slow and dreary music, which, after the tables had been cleared away, woke to something like a waltz. Then the various couples put their arms round each other's waists—according to peasant fashion—and twirled lugubriously round the room until the musicians dropped with exhaustion. But no one laughed, no one spoke. The old peasant father sat huddled up in a corner, and watched the dancers with a grim and melancholy eye—no doubt counting the cost. At any rate it was a very grand wedding, so I was told, and probably that comforted him, for the Black Forest Grossbauer is an aristocrat *pur sang*, and would prefer to mortgage his ancestral Hof up to the hilt rather than not do the thing properly and according to his position.

To return to the actual courtship, the point that impresses the observer most is its sobriety. Let me take our two girls as examples. Their suitors call on them and request them for the pleasure of a walk, which boon they graciously conceed. The pairs then go off together—not arm in arm, because they are not yet engaged—but at a respectful distance, and, as far as one can see, wrapt in impenetrable silence. This happens once a week at the most, and the monotony is only broken by the yearly Kaiser Ball, to which the girls are invited by their soldier "friends." Be it admitted that our treasures are really treasures domestically and morally; other people may find their servants' *affaires du cœur* less agreeable, but our Freda and Lena are from the country, and have a certain Bauern Stolz which

forbids the slightest unwarranted familiarity, the slightest overstepping of the boundaries of respectability They would no more think of inviting their "Schatz" into the kitchen than they would think of stealing. But this solidity of character is typical of the German working class. Just as one sees no drunkards on the streets, so also is one seldom if ever tormented by the sight of brazen-faced couples whose exuberant signals of affection cast a blot upon the landscape. Here they walk arm in arm or hand in hand—pictures of propriety and decorum. It is true that there are cases enough of immorality, but for the most part they are atoned for by subsequent marriage. A soldier, for instance, is not allowed to marry during his two years with the colours, and as that is the time when his courtship is usually in full progress, it sometimes happens that the marriage ceremony has to be postponed to a time which social order regards as "too late." But it *is* performed, and that is something to his credit, and it may be added that illegitimate children, according to German law, are legitimised by the subsequent legal union of the parents.

And after marriage? I have already mentioned in an earlier chapter that the German wife is far from being the brow-beaten, down-trodden creature of the fables, but it must be admitted that the husband is the recognised master of the situation—more through custom than by actual legal right. Legally the woman and her fortune can be completely safeguarded, but for all practical purposes the man is the ruler in the household, and she is content that it should be so. She has been brought

up to regard the man as the being who must and should have the best of everything, and obedience to his wishes and requirements is too deeply engrained in her for any resistance. She contents herself—perhaps wisely—with a subtle underground influence, and the respect with which she is treated by her husband and her children. For the average German does not abuse his power and authority; and whatever else he forgets, he never forgets that his wife is the mother of his children. That one fact seems to bind him to her, and to raise her as high in his estimation as any intellectual qualities could do. It is the same with the children, who, although they have escaped from the harsh rigour of a few generations ago, are still brought up to treat their parents with respect and deference, even when they are grown up and independent. It is often quite startling for the English observer to see how young men, well in their majority, will obey without question or protest their father's abrupt and somewhat military commands. Yet, on the whole, German family life seems to me very peaceful and united. The members hang tenaciously together, are usually devoted to each other, and domestic scandals and disagreements seem remarkable for their rarity. Divorce is easy to obtain, but it is looked upon as the highest disgrace, and, guilty or innocent, the mere fact that he has been a party in a divorce case is sufficient to ruin a man's professional career. (An officer, for instance, who has been divorced, or who has divorced his wife, is practically compelled to send in his commission.) As divorce cases are all carried on *de camera*, the

newspapers and a certain section of the public are cheated of many a sensational tit-bit, but I have not found that this consideration for individual feelings and public morality in any way increases the number of those seeking release from their conjugal ties. To be divorced is in itself a stigma which the details neither abate nor increase, and divorces are comparitively rare—peculiarly rare, one might say, when it is taken into consideration that there are no legal separations, and that divorce is the one and only remedy. No doubt the German character is largely responsible for this peaceful state of things. Tenacious, slow, imbued from his birth with a great sense of duty, not given either to excess or excitement, faithful and conscientious, the German has all the qualities which go to make a satisfactory husband. Perhaps he would not suit the more independent Englishwoman — though, curiously enough, I know of twenty of my countrywomen in Karlsruhe alone who have run the risk without regretting it—but he suits the German woman as thoroughly as she suits him, and what more could be desired ?

CHAPTER XIV

ANOTHER FABLE—CHEAP GERMANY

MY German Friend caused a mild commotion the other day by appearing at the breakfast table with a face flushed with excitement and pleasure.

"Just think what has happened!" she entreated. "Just try and imagine!"

Of course, as was expected and desired, nobody *could* imagine what had happened, though a few improbable suggestions were made. The great news was then burst upon us.

"Something has grown cheaper!"

"What?"

"Bread!"

General looks of strong disbelief.

"It must be the first of April. How much?"

"A whole pfennig a loaf!"

It was true. The astounding thing had actually come to pass—something had really grown cheaper. It was almost too good to be believed—we felt that an avenging Nemesis in the form of a new tax on matches or something equally necessary would immediately appear on the scene to quench our joy, but as yet—the incident I have just related occurred two days ago—nothing has happened, so we are beginning to breathe again. It will be seen, however, that cheapness is

something unusual, indeed practically unknown in a German household; and the hopeful English family proposing to come and settle in the Fatherland in order to "economise" had better change their minds and go elsewhere. I know just such a family, and I know all the experiences they went through, so that I feel myself in a position to act as warning spirit to any one labouring under the old delusion. This family was particularly sanguine.

"What we want," wrote the mother, "is a nice little eight-room house with just enough garden for the children to play in. Of course a bathroom and a good kitchen will be necessary, and above all things it must be cheap. I am sure in a small town like Karlsruhe one can get a nice house at a very low rent, and I should be very grateful if you would be on the look-out for something suitable."

I remonstrated so earnestly that I fancy the poor lady thought I had my private reasons for not wanting her in the neighbourhood. At any rate she ignored all my warnings and protests, and landed, with the whole family, at the best hotel.

"It looked so shabby that I was sure it would be cheap," she explained to me in triumph over her fine instinct in the matter of economy. There are some people whom it is wiser to leave to wander to their destruction in their own way, so I said nothing, trusting that the first week's hotel bill would be sufficiently convincing. My friend did not have to wait a week, however, before her eyes were very wide open indeed.

"But," she exclaimed, after the first day's exhausting search after a suitable place of residence, "where

are the houses? Everybody lives in flats. Why do they live in flats? They are horrid."

"They are cheaper," I ventured meekly.

"Why?"

"Because you can build as high as you like without having to pay more ground rent. Only the rich people have their own houses."

"How horrible! Aren't there any small houses to be had then—you know, nice little semi-detached villas for about £60 a year? Surely in a small town like this,"—etc. etc.

I showed her what there was to be had. There are some charming houses in Karlsruhe—real works of art, with every imaginable comfort and convenience except a garden, and rents ranging from £150 to £300 a year. They reduced my friend almost to tears.

"One hundred and eighty pounds for an eight-roomed house without a garden?—why, it is preposterous!" she told the house-agent in her best German. He looked very offended and threw open the window, displaying a backyard some ten feet by six.

"There is the garden!" he said, in a tone which said plainly what more could you want? "And as to the price," he went on, "it is very low for Karlsruhe." Which latter statement was perfectly true. We ourselves, as I proceeded to explain, live in an old-fashioned house with ten rooms and a backyard which we have succeeded in transforming into a miniature garden—no electric light, no central heating, no hot water, blessed with the close proximity of a railway, and a rent of £150 a year. And the landlord treats us as though he were indulging in a kind of noble-hearted charity in not raising our rent by another

£20. All this sounded very depressing, and, with the justice which is usual in such cases, my friend remarked that it would have been kinder if I had told her all this before. In the first moment of wrath and indignation she wanted to pack up and move on to a "typical cheap German town," but it was pointed out to her that unless she wanted to bury herself in what is called a "Nest," she would find nothing cheaper—that in fact the "typical cheap German town" is no more than a fable of times long past. This and the hotel bill helped to crush her last resistance, and she condescended to take a flat with the meek observation that "perhaps it would not be so bad." The flat was on the fourth floor in a quiet part of the town, and consisted of five rooms, a kitchen of minute dimensions without a range, and an equally minute bathroom without a bath. For this Eldorado she paid £75 a year, and was told that she had done well. The next point was the servant question. My German Friend here came to the rescue, and obtained the services of an honest, red-cheeked girl from the country, who declared herself a cook and able to do any amount of work. My English friend smiled again—for the first time since the first day's house hunting—when she heard the wages, and she smiled still more when she saw what prodigies of industry and goodwill that small sum of £15 a year had procured.

"She can't cook much," she admitted, "but she works from morning to night, and is always so cheerful and willing and quite content to have only Sunday afternoon free. As soon as I have got her into cap and apron she will do splendidly."

But the cap and apron proved the hitch. Neither

good words nor threats would induce the paragon to change her own peculiar and miscellaneous costume. Although the sight of the rather slatternly object at the front door nearly broke my friend's heart, she had to yield to the inevitable.

"If you want a girl who will wear a cap and apron you will have to pay double and she will do half the work," she was told by the authorities, and after that the sturdy little maid-of-all-work was allowed to wander to the market hatless, capless, with a blue apron and a collarless blouse without protest.

For a time all went well. After true English fashion my friend proceeded to continue her life on the English method without regard to the fact that she was no longer in England. She had, for instance, English breakfasts of ham and eggs, etc., and it was only after a few weeks that those luxuries disappeared unhonoured and unsung from the daily menu. After that the evening dinner vanished, and we were cautiously questioned as to how we lived and what we ate.

"I can't imagine what the Germans live on or how they manage to get so fat," she complained querulously—she was still blindly determined that *all* Germans are abnormally stout. "Everything is so frightfully dear. Meat is appalling. For a moderately good piece I have to pay twice as much as I would in England. Bread is twice as expensive, butter twice as expensive, vegetables twice as expensive, tea three times as expensive — the only thing one can get cheaply is home-grown fruit, and one can't live on that all day."

I agreed with her, and pointed out that as a logical

consequence the grand English meals are unknown here even amongst the well-to-do families. A breakfast of coffee and rolls, a midday meal of soup, meat, and pudding, a simple tea with bread and butter, a supper of cold meat, cheese, or fruit—such is the culinary programme of nearly every house in Karlsruhe. In a great many of the moderately situated families the midday pudding is altogether discarded, and I doubt if anywhere a four-course dinner is the usual thing. This applies to other towns and to the richest people. Everywhere there is the same simplicity where food is concerned. The food is good and plentiful on wealthy tables—on poorer tables it is not so good or so plentiful, that is the chief difference. This simplicity is partly the result of taste, partly the result of the high rate of living. My English friend exaggerated when she said that everything was twice as expensive in Germany—a third would have been nearer the truth—but it is not an exaggeration to say that an English person is only half as rich here as in his own land. Unless he adapts himself to the German mode of living, and drops the luxuries to which he is accustomed, he will find himself very badly off indeed. The German is not badly off, and does not feel the increasing financial burden so heavy, simply because he is, and has always been, content to live quietly and to do without what *he* considers the unnecessary things of life. He lays no stress on appearances. You will never find a German pinching and squeezing the family purse in order to dress well or in the latest fashion. Clothes are appallingly expensive—I use the word "appalling" in all seriousness—not only in Karlsruhe but everywhere,

and the direct consequence is the badly-dressed people which sadden the German streets. It is no doubt part tastelessness, but it is also in no small degree because good and tasteful things are only to be had for heavy gold. The rich people *do* dress well, because they can afford unnecessary luxuries, but there are not many rich people hereabouts, and the moderately circumstanced folk are quite content to go shabby and live simply, reserving their money for things which they *do* consider necessary—education, holidays, the theatre, concerts, and so on.

In this brief review of German living I must not forget the taxes which cause the periodical outbursts of indignation. On the whole they seem to me irritating but more justly divided. Not only the rich are taxed but everybody down to the kitchen-maid with her £15 a year. It must be very galling to have to part with even a few shillings of such hard-earned wages, and still more galling to have to render account of all tips and money-presents, but nowadays one is so sorry for the poor rich people in one's own country that the system of general taxation seems quite acceptable. The lower classes accept this income tax with comparatively little complaint—it is the indirect taxation which causes the most wrath. The tax on matches is the latest injury over which the German people are brooding, and many and cunning are the ways in which the objectionable burden is shirked, some people even going to the length of making their own matches. Which proves, I think, that it is more the German love of grumbling and protesting than real suffering, since the saving is minimum and the

time wasted considerable. At the same time the taxes in Germany are sufficiently heavy to make living for many families distinctly problematic. On an income, we will say, of £159 the direct taxation will be about £3, and the indirect taxation, the price of food and dwelling, will make the expenditure of the rest an all too easy matter. But the German adapts himself quickly, and what is more he is not in the least ashamed of adapting himself.

"Food has grown more expensive—therefore I shall not have a new dress this summer," says Frau S.; "therefore I shall not entertain so much, therefore we shall do without such and such a dainty or pleasure." And she brings the required sacrifices without more ado. Wealth and poverty are, after all, purely relative and form her standpoint. She is quite as well off and quite as capable of further sacrifices as the English lady who appears every evening in full gala to partake of a four-course dinner served by daintily-dressed parlour-maids. To tell the truth, I do not think that either Frau S. or her husband would at all appreciate either the gala, the dinner, or the parlour-maids. I am convinced the gala and the servants alone would be quite sufficient to spoil all Gemütlichkeit in their eyes.

After all this the natural question for the more fastidious and delicately nurtured Englishman to ask is, Why do so many foreigners come to Germany, and why is it that once they have settled they usually stay in spite of their grumblings? Being myself a case in point, I should be able to answer the question, and yet I find a decided difficulty.

There are many answers, but the chief answer is something so vague and indefinable that it is hard to express in words. It is true—food, dwelling, and clothes, the three great necessities of life, are dearer here, and in many ways not so good, and yet it is also true that there are other things to be had which in England are beyond the reach of the poor man. There is a wonderful charm in the easy-going, simple, and unpretentious life, and it is the advantage of allowing the German and his imitator to indulge in certain luxuries, in certain pleasures which are dearer to him than fine clothes, fine homes, and expensive food. The German will bear anything, shabby clothes, stuffy flats, and plain living, so long as he can enjoy himself in his own way, so long as he can afford a long yearly holiday, expeditions into the country, afternoons in the Stadt garten, concerts, and last but not least a regular attendance at the great National School, of which I shall speak in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER XV

THE THEATRE AND MUSICAL LIFE

I THINK if I had no other reasons for living in Germany I should still stay on for the sake of the doctors and the theatre. Hence enviable people who never need the former, and unenviable people who never want the latter, will find themselves deprived of two of the things which are at once cheap and good in this country. Of the doctors, I need only re-echo from my own experience what the world knows—namely, that they are brilliant specialists who do not charge two guineas for conferring on you the inestimable boon of telling you to come again. Of the theatre I can say with conviction that it is an institution to which Germany owes more than perhaps even she realises, and of which she has the right to be proud above all nations.

In no country in the world does the theatre play so mighty and so recognised a part. In England the theatre is a relaxation, a place of entertainment; in Germany it is an education, a serious institution, and according to the standpoint from which it is judged it has become in the one country a place for second and third class amusement, and in the other a temple of Art, a great school for those

who have left the elementary steps of learning behind them. If this statement is disputed, I need only ask what self-respecting father in a middle-sized English town would dream of sending his eighteen year old daughter as a matter of course once or even twice a week to the local theatre? The very idea would make him throw up his hands in horror. He would declare that such a proceeding would be the ruin of his daughter's character and morals, that he would be laying her open to the danger of hearing the most wretched clap-trap—if not worse—that was ever written. And he would be perfectly right. The most he does is to take her once a year to London, and if he has the unusual luck to hit upon the season of a reckless manager indifferent to earthly gain, he may be able to take her to a Shakespearean performance, otherwise he has the choice between very doubtful after-dinner society plays, vulgar pantomime, stupid and trivial musical comedies, and harmless little farces which have no value except as a *passe-temps* for those who have no brains left for anything deeper. The German who goes to London is always pathetically disappointed.

"I suppose Shakespeare *was* an Englishman, wasn't he?" one young student remarked to me after a visit to England. I said that I believed so, unless the Germans had recently adopted him.

"Then why is London the only capital in the world where you can't hear his plays acted?"

"Oh, but you can sometimes. Only just lately, for instance, we have been having a Shakespearean revival."

"Revival! You don't mean to say you *revive* Shakespeare? Why, we have never let him die. You can see him every day and on any German theatre—we have always made a special study of him."

Then, after a long, rather uncomfortable pause—

"Who is your greatest playwright just now?"

I ventured a few names. He shook his head at all of them except Bernhard Shaw, whom he recognised and seemed to appreciate.

"Yes, but he is something unusual—not strictly dramatic. Haven't you any one like our Hauptmann, or Sudermann, or like the French Rostend?"

"The most amusing part was the audience," he said laughing. "When anybody on the stage did or said anything noble or heroic the people clapped, and when the sentimental parts came a thin orchestra played a melancholy accompaniment. I suppose every nation has its tastes and ideals, but both actions seemed to me unworthy of serious drama."

The expression "serious drama" stuck in my memory as something unusual. It occurred to me that the Englishman does not go to the theatre for serious drama, he goes to be amused and digest his dinner. Under such circumstances the theatre cannot be serious in the best sense; it can be thrilling, dramatic, realistic, but it cannot reach a high level because a high level is not required or appreciated, and remains the risky experiment of a Quixotic manager. Hence it is only natural that to go to the theatre as regularly and as often as the German does would, in England, be proof of a decided frivolity, not to say immorality. But here in Karlsruhe nearly every moderately well-to-do family has its season ticket

for the theatre, which allows for two, and sometimes three performances a week, and the grown-up girl who has not seen the chief masterpieces of the German and foreign classics, besides a goodly number of modern dramatic works, would think that her education had been shamefully neglected. Her education, be it observed! It is the same with music. Whatever else must be sacrificed, the family must have its opera. They go as shabby as you like and sit on the cheapest seats without shame, but go they must. And it must be added that poverty can prove no real barrier. In Karlsruhe, for instance—and again Karlsruhe is fairly typical in this respect—it is possible to hear all the classic plays at specially reduced prices, which means that a seat in the gallery costs twenty pf., and the best seat in the house three marks. On such occasions the theatre is crammed from floor to ceiling. Every class is represented. The schoolboy, the schoolgirl, the shopkeeper, the shopkeeper's assistant, the student, the soldier, the under-officer, the officer himself, and far away up among the gods the ordinary day-labourer. The particular performance which I have in mind was Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans*; and it was hard to decide which was the most absorbing—the play or the audience. The former was well staged and performed, but the wrapt, earnest faces, the absolute, attentive quiet of that heterogeneous crowd, brought together solely by actual love of the thing, was perhaps the more impressive, the more inspiring. As I have said, that was a special "cheap" performance. The ordinary prices for a play or opera—the theatre here serves for both—is from eighty pf. to seven

marks, but the season-ticket holder gets his place for about half the price. Besides the numberless free seats which are given to deserving cases, there are big reductions made for students at the Polytechnicum, Art Schools, and Conservatorium, and once a year the whole of Wagner's *Ring* is given in an extra *abonnement*, which means that on the best seats the whole four evenings cost sixteen marks, and on the cheaper seats about four marks. I give these details to show that the theatre and its educational advantages are within the reach of every one, and it is only fair to add that the performances are first class even when compared to those of larger and richer theatres. It is only necessary to mention that Mottle was fifteen years conductor here, and that many of the singers have performed in Covent Garden and Bayreuth, to prove that it is not a case of cheapness and poor quality.

Those wonderful evenings in my German Year! Though they recur so constantly they do not lose their charm or their impressiveness—rather each time I am more stirred to respect and admiration for the deep-rooted love of the great and beautiful, which must be as well in the audience as in the performers. They are not fashionable evenings—nothing could be a greater contrast than an evening in the Karlsruhe Court Theatre and an evening in Covent Garden. Nobody goes because it is "the thing," nobody goes to show off diamonds and fine clothes. Dowdy and shabby, Karlsruhe's little world plants itself in every place it can get hold of, and sits or stands there in breathless silence from the warning tap of the conductor's baton to the fall of the curtain,

when it delivers its judgment either in rapturous enthusiasm or merely complimentary applause—according to the performance. For the Karlsruhers are very critical and not easily satisfied.

One would suppose that six hours of serious so-called "heavy" music would appeal only to the elect and highly educated, but a glance up at the gallery of the Court Theatre on a Wagner evening proves quite the contrary. It is an orderly crowd that sits up among the gods, but it is a crowd composed of the poorest classes. I remember some time ago a special performance of *Tannhäuser* which was being given with a famous guest in the title rôle. I had neglected to procure a seat beforehand, and was told at the ticket office that only one single place in the topmost gallery was to be had. In Germany one can do as one likes in such matters, so I took the seat and went. The stage was not visible from my point of view, though the music sounded better than from any other part of the theatre, so my eyes were free to study the faces about me. For the most part they were quite common faces, and poverty was written all over the respectable though shabby clothes. Nevertheless in that hour at least my neighbours seemed to be neither common nor poor. Some of those nearest me sat with closed eyes, others had their heads supported in their hands—but no one moved, no one spoke. Only once, during Elizabeth's prayer, a woman's hand stretched over the seat behind and grasped my shoulder. It was a thin, work-worn hand, not very clean. I turned and looked at her in some annoyance. She was a poor-looking creature of

the market-woman class, but her face was illuminated, transfigured with a kind of ecstasy which I shall never forget. I said nothing, and when the prayer ended she dropped back with a muttered apology. No one heeded or noticed the incident. It was as though each one of those weary toilers had thrown aside their daily cares and wandered off for a brief respite into another world, which belongs to the lowest and the highest if he have but ears to hear and eyes to see. It was a Sunday evening, but I think the strictest Sabbatarian must have hesitated before condemning had he for once broken his law and sat beside me in that dense crowd of dreamers. I think he must have admitted that it is better to listen to ennobling music than to loaf round public-house corners—to be elevated to a higher sphere at least once a week, than be dragged lower by a day's depraving idleness. On such an evening one finds one of the answers to the question, Why is it that a German Sunday crowd is quieter, more decent and respectable, than our own? It is not least because the people are not flung entirely on their own resources, not compelled to seek their pleasures in the lowest quarter. They are offered the best at the lowest possible price. On Sunday, their one and only holiday, the galleries and theatre are open to them, and he who prefers to seek mental refreshment rather than the pleasures of the public-house is at least given the *chance* to respond to the higher inclination. And it is noteworthy how many *do* respond from all classes, even from the lowest. The German State has, indeed, recognised a fact which we have always chosen to ignore, namely, that

a National Theatre and Opera is something more than a hot-house for national talent—it is an immense power, a subtle method of influencing the lives and characters and thoughts of a whole people. Only a State theatre, or a theatre supported by a fixed official income, dare make an ennobling use of that influence. A self-supporting theatre must eventually lower itself to its audience, it has not the financial strength to fight against the public taste, already ruined by the unwholesome fare offered it. Here the State theatre has done its work regardless of gain or loss. The people, down to the lowest, have been educated *nolens volens* to appreciate the best; they have had no rubbish offered them to satisfy their lower tastes; they have been deliberately forced upwards; and now that the higher standard has been obtained, it is possible for a private theatre to exist and retain that standard. The packed house which responded to the invitation to witness an old classic tragedy proved that the audience was ripe enough to appreciate what was offered them, and who can calculate the benefit which was gathered from such an evening? But the State Theatre is still a necessity; it is, as it were, the backbone of the dramatic and musical national life, the high-water mark which the private theatres must struggle to attain at all costs. Moreover, the State Theatre raises not only the audience, but it can afford to place the performers in a higher and more secure position, socially and financially. A singer or an actor in a State Theatre is a State official; he receives a settled income, and after a certain number of years' service a small but sufficient pension.

In Karlsruhe, for instance, he is the direct servant of the Grand Duke, to whom the theatre belongs. He is presented at Court, and so long as he proves himself capable and worthy of the position accorded him, he can always count on the interest and support of his royal master. It cases where a great talent is in question he is the spoilt darling, granted long leave to travel as guest to other theatres and other countries, receiving his full salary the whole time, only compelled to sing when it pleases him and what pleases him, and even has his debts paid for him. Naturally this refers only to the chief actors and singers, but even the lesser lights can, if they are careful, secure a livelihood. On the whole, therefore, their position is enviable compared to that of those engaged in private theatres, where there are no pensions, where only "season" engagements and uncertain pay are to be obtained.

The besetting dangers of a State Theatre—red-tapeism and a narrow-minded censorship—are escaped here with remarkable success. Occasionally a worthless piece is dragged on to the stage through patronage, and occasionally a modern masterpiece is ignored because it does not conform to the rigor of the Court morality, but both mistakes are only the exaggeration of two valuable virtues. The same patronage has brought to light many an ignored genius—every one knows, for instance, what Wagner owed to the King of Bavaria—and the same censorship keeps out the poisonous rubbish which infests private theatres. The State recognises its responsibility, and if it is sometimes overzealous, the fault is on the right side.

The power of the State Theatre lies in the fact that it is not limited to the capital. Every moderate sized town in Germany has its Court or Town Theatre, where the masterpieces of every language and the greatest works of the composers are produced from September to June, without interruption, for a sum which is within the reach of every one. I have visited other theatres outside Karlsruhe, and have never found that the standard has been lowered —I do not think that the standard could be lowered without financial loss. It is significant, for instance, that at Carnival, when, to suit the season, an operetta is given, the theatre is comparatively empty. Possibly the people are otherwise occupied; but when "Tristan and Isolde" is given, no matter what the season, the house is packed from floor to ceiling. I remember last July that Wagner's great masterpiece was given as the last performance in the theatrical year. It was a suffocating summer's night, when you would have supposed that no ordinary human being would willingly endure the atmosphere of a theatre, still less have the mental energy to listen with intelligence to five hours of the most serious music. An operetta—yes, but "Tristan and Isolde"! Nevertheless the house was sold out, there was not even standing room left. Doubtless there is a pecular charm in those midsummer nights' performances. In Karlsruhe the theatre is situated on the borders of the Castle grounds, in front stretches the broad flower-grown Schlossplatz, and between the acts one wanders out into the clear night air and watches the moon rise over the forest trees with the lingering echoes of well-loved

motifs still ringing in one's ears. It reminds one of Bayreuth, save that in Bayreuth it is the sinking sun over the hills which greets the audience as it streams out; but there is the same "Stimmung," the same consciousness that those about one are stirred by the same emotions, are listening and responding to the same harmonies. Perhaps even more here than there one is impressed and inspired with the knowledge that they are all music-lovers, not imitative parrots of fashion seeking to do "the latest thing." It is that genuine whole-souled love and understanding which raises a Wagner performance, even in a small German town, to the level of the grandest Covent Garden effort. The atmosphere—the "Stimmung" is everything. A few years ago a celebrated German conductor was offered an engagement for two years in America to conduct in a series of operas, for which he was to receive—for German ideas—a fabulous salary. At the end of the first year he came back, with the despairing declaration that he could not stand it—not even at the highest price. The consciousness that the audience did not understand and appreciate as he was accustomed to them understanding and appreciating paralysed him, paralysed his orchestra, and paralysed the singers. No doubt things are better to-day, but it is inevitable that music, and to some extent drama, should stand at a higher level in a country where they are intelligently appreciated by the people. The theatre in Germany is financially supported by the State, but above all it is supported by the need for it in the heart of the multitude. It is only necessary to count

the institutions, Vereins, schools, with which Karlsruhe is inundated to feel how deep that need is. There are at least a dozen choral societies, composed for the most part of the lower classes, under the direction of a professional musician; as many schools where a first-class musical education can be had for a few pounds a year; and more private orchestras, quartettes, than I should like to count. There is also a large and important Bach Society, which next Sunday is giving a lecture on its patron musician, with an illustrating concert for the benefit of the working classes—a musical event which, I am told, will be honoured by the attendance of all the factory folk in and about Karlsruhe. This Bach Society reminds me of a poor little sewing-woman, who used to come to our house to attend to the dilapidated household goods. She always looked so thin and ill and poverty-stricken that it seemed a cruelty to suggest work to her, but her frail body was kept alive by an inexhaustible fund of energy, and she was all eagerness and willingness. One day she brought back our damaged possessions, together with an additional burden in the form of a stout volume of Bach's oratorios.

"I had to come a little earlier, Gnädiges Fraulein," she apologised meekly. "You see, we have practice this evening."

"Practice?" I echoed.

"Yes; I belong to the Bach Verein. We are hard at work at the Matthäuspassion for the next concert."

"Do you sing, then?" The question was pardonable, for she was coughing most of the time, and her voice sounded dry and husky.

"Only a little; but they say I have a good ear, and sometimes I just sit and listen. It is so beautiful."

Her whole face had lighted up, she looked stronger and healthier for that short moment. I believe that without that one pleasure, that one bright spot in her life, the little strength she had would long since have been broken. Some time afterwards circumstances made it necessary for me to seek her out in her own dwelling. It was scarcely more than a divided cupboard at the back of some old houses, and in the one division was her bed—in the other her piano. The miserable bed and the carefully tended piano made a picture whose explanation needed no words. It told sufficiently of a great sacrifice made to the ruling passion of a seemingly wretched and sunless existence. And her case is not isolated. In greater or lesser degree the average German of every class sacrifices something of his time, his money, and above all his interest, to music. From the over-worked schoolboy who spends his few spare hours at the piano, to the business man who plays regularly quartette, one finds the same earnest enthusiasm, the same love and understanding.

It goes without saying that the half-terrible, half-ridiculous spectre of dilettantism is not wholly banished from German soil. The maiden who revels in Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words," and pretty showy little *pièces de salon* with trills in the right hand and a running accompaniment in the left, may sometimes be met, but she is not admired as an infant prodigy—even by her family—and she

is firmly suppressed by public taste, so that one hears very little of her. The average German is a true musician; and if it be true that "the man who hath no music in his soul is fit for treason," then by inversion the Teuton must be the most trustworthy man on earth. And, indeed, I am not sure that my affection and admiration for him has not grown fastest in the dim Karlsruhe theatre, when the music of the greatest Germans has broken upon the tense stillness. I am not sure that in the stifling atmosphere of the fourth gallery I did not learn to know him at his best and truest—as the musician and the dreamer.

CHAPTER XVI

EDUCATION

IN the course of my German year—or rather years—it has been my fate to meet many people belonging to many different circles and of all ages. Some have merely passed across my horizon, others have remained, but whether my acquaintance with them has been merely superficial or otherwise, they have as a whole impressed me as people either exceptionally intelligent or exceptionally well-educated. I have not made up my mind as to the exceptional intelligence—I divide German women, for instance, into two distinct groups, the intensely wide-awake or the intensely dull—but certainly it is very seldom that one stumbles over such crass ignorance as one sometimes finds in England, even amongst the so-called educated classes. It never struck me until I had been some time in Germany that there was anything wrong with our system of education, or that our standard was not the highest; and when a German professor informed me in a courteous roundabout way that English schools were delightful places, where one learnt as little as possible at the highest possible price, I was most indignant. Then gradually, by force of comparison, my national self-satisfaction dwindled, and

I have been forced to the concluion that the professor's statement was not wholly without justification—especially where women's education is concerned. There are no doubt one or two public schools for girls in England where a sound education can be obtained, but if one may judge by results, the average private school, if an abode of happiness, is little better than the finishing establishment of our grandmothers. I know too many English girls of average intelligence who have been the "best" pupils at first-class and very expensive boarding-schools, not to have been able to form an estimate of the average English girl's knowledge. As a rule she can read intelligently, sometimes she can write correctly—but by no means always—she can add and subtract, and make herself a nuisance on the piano. Add to that a blur of geography, history, and literature, a few sentences of atrocious French and worse German, and you have the sum-total of her earthly wisdom. Her parents are very proud; she plays tennis excellently, and to all appearances is mentally well-equipped, for have they not paid £150 a year for her education, and has she not passed the Cambridge Higher Local with first-class honours? But ask that same prodigy a single question outside her so-called "period," ask her a single question concerning modern literature or modern events, and she looks at you in absolute blankness. In truth, she has been crammed with her periods for that examination—"the rest is silence." Cramming for and the love of examinations is the curse of English education; the examinations themselves prove next to nothing, and sometimes are wholly misleading, and the system by which pupils are dragged up to

grasp the empty glory is enough to make sound knowledge an impossibility. The German pedagogue starts out on his task with an entirely different theory. Examinations in themselves count for very little in his eyes; it is the year's work, the class work of the pupil which matters. The examination is the tolerated evil—not the end-all and the be-all of a school career. He regards the school, moreover, as a preparation for education—not the education itself, which begins after the boy or girl has left school—and it is essential, therefore, that the preparation should be as thorough and embrace the widest possible ground. There must be no vagueness, no collecting of scraps or polishing up of set periods. What the pupil learns must be learnt in a way which will make it of lasting utility to him. But there is a shadowy side to the preparation. It is said that the German schoolboy and girl are overworked, and there is all too much truth in the statement; the pressure put upon them is extreme, and leads sometimes to tragic breakdowns. Few Germans look back upon their school days with any particular pleasure; it is for them the time when they work hardest, have least leisure, are least children. A little six-year-old boy of my acquaintance, who, after his first week at school, asked his mother, "Then, shall I never be able to play again?" voiced the pathetic appeal of the greater number of German children. From the hour that they pass through the school doors they have ceased to be children—they have become workers, responsible beings, to whom life has become an immense, serious reality, and play an ever-decreasing interlude. The evil of

the system is apparent to every one, and efforts are being made to check it, to find a middle path between the English slackness and the German high pressure —hitherto with little success. The reason that the German is advancing so rapidly in the world is that he spares no one, least of all himself. "Either you are fit, and then you must bear the burden, or you are not fit, and then it is best that you go to the wall at once." Such is the stern admonition which is addressed to every young man or woman wishing to force their way into the professional world, and the demands made upon them are increasing daily. It is useless for the schools to attempt to curtail their curriculum so long as the State continues to screw its standard to an ever higher and less attainable pitch. All professions are overcrowded, and the State can afford to be particular. Those who do pass their tests have the chance of a brilliant career before them; those who fail, mentally or physically, have proved their inability to fill any important post, and the State is glad that it has weeded them out. The same applies to business and trade. The successful business man in Germany is the man who works unremittingly from eight o'clock in the morning till seven o'clock at night, who takes one holiday a year, and bears the strain without mental or physical injury. Those who cannot stand the hours nor the constant tax upon mind and body, who need holidays and sport as a relaxation, are simply "hustled" out of the competition. There is no room anywhere for the weakling—only the fittest can survive. Hence, whatever branch the schoolboy chooses, his life is bound to be a hard one, and it is not to be wondered at that

he looks older than his years. From six to eighteen his time is spent in steady work with short holidays—ten weeks in the year is the average amount. In all probability he makes his début into the educational world through the Kindergarten—a merciful German institution which prepares the child's mind for the coming strain; he then passes on into the Elementary School, where he remains until his tenth year. It is then time for him to choose the direction in which his studies are to tend. If he is going in for a professional career he is sent to the ordinary Gymnasium, where he receives a thorough classic education on the old system; if he is going in for a commercial or technical career he passes into the Realgymnasium, where the greater stress is laid upon practical science, modern languages, and mathematics. There he remains until he is eighteen. By that time, following the normal course, he has reached the first class, but even if he has only reached the second he is considered as having reached a sufficiently high standard to be excused one year of his service in the army. Should he, for some reason or another, have been educated at a private school, he will have to pass the Einjährige Examination—a test requiring the same amount of knowledge as a boy in the second class must possess. The Einjährige Examination—or, in the usual routine, the second class standard—is the lowest with which an educated German can start life. It is by no means a low standard, as the many coaching schools testify, and the problem how it is to be reached is the one which the parents of not over intelligent boys have to face and solve. The private teachers and schools exist in order to help them.

The elementary schools and the Gymnasium are all State or town institutions, which can be attended by every one who can afford the necessary sixty marks a year; and, in spite of the mixed society in which his son must mingle, the average German father prefers to send him there rather than to a private school. A father residing, we will say, in Karlsruhe, would no more think of sending his son to a boarding school in another town than he would think of sending him to a reformatory. The boy stays at home and attends the Town Gymnasium, or, if his home should happen to be in the country, he is sent to some professor's family in the nearest town. Boarding-schools for boys have, in fact, like the other private schools, a certain stigma attached to them. They exist for those who are either too delicate, too stupid, or too unmanageable and untrustworthy to be brought up to the critical Einjährige standard by any other means. In the Gymnasium the boy already enjoys a certain intellectual freedom. If he is treated as a machine, he is at least treated as a reasonable machine, which will work because it knows that the work is essential to its existence in after life. He is not watched over or guided. He *must* work—how he works is his own affair. This requires of him a certain strength of character and a considerable amount of brains. Should he lack both he is weeded out and sent to a private school, where he receives "individual care and attention." Hence a boy who enters life with a private school education behind him is already labelled as mentally or physically or morally unfit.

Continuing with the average German's educational career, he passes from the Gymnasium into

the army, and that year with the troops is his salvation, the great antidote for the errors of his previous upbringing. But for that he would become an energiless, unhealthy victim of over-work, physically, and consequently mentally, unfit for the strenuous battle before him. For that year his brain rests, his body is trained and steeled, and he re-enters the lists as a powerful, fully developed man. If he has chosen a professional career he then passes into the university, which requires of him the first-class Gymnasium standard, but once he has passed her portals she takes no further notice of him. He can study or "bummel" just as he pleases. He is then more than ever a voluntary worker, working for his own advancement and benefit, and it is unnecessary, therefore, to force or control him. Except for the examination at the end of his career the German student is under no sort of surveillance, and the lectures are only there to lend him an indirect and additional assistance. To all practical purposes he must study by himself, and his whole previous education has prepared him for the task. The foundations, whatever they cost, are at least firm and secure. He can continue to build on alone.

A girl's education—and here the superiority to the English system as regards results is the most marked—is carried on on almost the same lines as the boy's, with the difference that private schools enjoy a degree more favour. Many parents object to the inevitable undesirable elements which find their way into the town schools, and prefer to send their daughters either to the boarding or private day schools. The former does not abound in the

same numbers or the same dimensions as in England. In Karlsruhe there is a "model" boarding-school under the direction of the Dowager Grand-Duchess —a fine building allowing for about sixty pupils, and fitted up with every imaginable convenience. In many ways it is equal to anything I have seen in England—especially where the domestic and feminine side of the education is concerned. Each class, for instance, has its own sitting-room—charming little boudoirs, kept in the most immaculate order, and characterised by many dainty individual touches. The cubicles, with their hot and cold water wash-hand-stands, the luxurious bathrooms, the broad airy passages and classrooms, the general air of freshness and cleanliness, changed all my previously conceived theories as regards German boarding-schools, and even the English people who went with me on my tour of inspection were compelled to admiration. Yet it was an essentially German school, as we were quickly reminded, a few Backfische in the school uniform, with fresh cheeks and tightly braided hair, who greeted us on the staircase with a profound curtsey, being enough to bring us back to the reality. Also the longer school hours, the fewer holidays, the general indifference to sport, the moderate fees, were markedly German features. No doubt here the educational years pass happily enough, with less of the usual strain and stress, but such a school and such an education is the exception rather than the rule. Although the fees are so low—£70 a year is, I believe, the charge made for German pupils—they are still a large consideration for German parents. They

argue that an equally thorough and perhaps broader education can be obtained at the town school for 60 marks a year, and that it is, moreover, a mistake to send children away from home in the most impressionable years of their life. As a rule they send their daughters into what is called the Höhere Töchter Schule, an equivalent for our High School, and there she can remain to the end of her education. Those who wish to study later at a university enter the Mädchen Gymnasium, which is conducted on exactly the same lines as the boys' Gymnasium. Up to the present, Karlsruhe is one of the few towns that have a separate institution for girls. In Mannheim, for instance, the girls attend the same Gymnasium as the boys, and the experiment of mixed classes has proved successful, both sexes being stimulated to do their utmost. This Gymnasium education is unrivalled. Compare a German girl who has been through the course with an English schoolgirl of the same age, and one is struck not only by the variety of the former's knowledge but by its definiteness, its thoroughness. She has not merely "heard of things," which is about all the English girls can say when questioned. She knows, and knows intelligently, not by any means as a parrot who has been drilled with a few sentences. No doubt she has worked twice as hard as her English cousin, as the school hours show. The ordinary schoolgirl in Germany works from eight o'clock to one o'clock, with fifteen minutes' break, and again in the afternoon from three to five. Besides that she has her extra lessons, practising, and a heavy load of home work. It is not at all unusual for

quite young girls to work late into the evening, and even into the night, and the sallow faces and short-sighted eyes which so often strike one in this country can often be traced back to over-work and lack of exercise. On the whole, one is surprised that there are not more cases of mental and physical break-down, and my observations have led me to conclude that the German girl is at any rate physically far more capable of persistent labour than an English girl. I do not believe that the latter could stand the strain which the former bears with comparatively little effort. The short sight and pale faces are inevitable, but they are by no means universal, and it is very rare—far rarer than among the boys—that a girl sustains serious or incurable injury from her school time. She seems made of iron, without nerves, without the need for relaxation or rest. She can go on and on and still retain a very remarkable mental agility and elasticity. As I write the picture of two typical schoolgirls whom I met on a recent visit rises before my mind's eye. The one attends a Gymnasium for boys and girls, the other the town school, and their work hours, for our ideas, are preposterous. Yet a livelier, brighter, more intelligent couple I have rarely had the pleasure of encountering. They seemed absolutely irrepressible and remarkably healthy. What was more, their work had no terrors for them; one heard no lamentations that the holidays were at an end. The Gymnastian even took the opportunity to learn all the English she could, filling up her spare moments with an English grammar, and experimenting on me with the result of her researches. The other

could already talk English fluently and with very little accent, besides French, Italian, and Greek, and seemed to have a wide and definite knowledge on subjects which, for an English girl of the same age, would have been closed books. It was indeed difficult to believe that they were only fourteen and fifteen respectively, their ideas, their attitude towards life and towards their work was precocious, but not unpleasantly so. Somehow or other they had retained their high spirits; they could dance well, and enjoyed a certain amount of exercise, though games played no important part in their programme. It was obvious that their work was the chief thing, and absorbed the chief part of their interests. They did not go to school because they had to, because school is a necessary evil attendant on youth. Their work was something serious, the cultivation of the mind something intensely desirable. In all this they were encouraged by their parents, who would never have been satisfied with a polite "polish." They also took work seriously, and should their children desire to continue their studies or develop a particular talent they would gladly open the road for them. Thus the one girl will probably devote herself to music, as her elder sister has devoted herself to art, and, as her sister, when the time comes she will study away from home. In the meantime she continues her ordinary education with energy, and seems to find a decided satisfaction in the effort.

This attitude towards their studies provides the explanation—or a part explanation—for the German girl's educational superiority. She learns willingly, with

an avidity which cannot be exhausted. The proof of this is to be found in the voluntary continuation of her work after her schooldays are over. The numberless lectures which are held in Karlsruhe during the year are crowded by women and young girls who have just left school; the Kränzchen, of which I have already spoken, where they meet together either to read or speak some foreign tongue, are all organised out of the need to go on with, or at any rate keep up, what they have learnt, and this need continues right through their life. At a time when the English woman will laughingly tell you, "Oh, I have forgotten all that—my schooldays are so far behind me," the German woman will be able to display a mind kept bright with patient, steadfast, intellectual burnishing. I do not wish to put the case in a more brilliant light than the truth admits. I know some very dull and stupid German women, and some whose knowledge consists of a few showy foreign sentences; what I wish to convey is, that taking an averagely intelligent type from both races, the German woman has the broader intellectual outlook and the firmer intellectual basis. No doubt she pays for it. However full of interest her schooldays may have been, they cannot have been the happy, cloudless, irresponsible days which the English woman can look back upon in after-life, and she has, like her brother, the failings which a home upbringing entails—not, however, to the same extent as an English girl has under the same circumstances. It is one of the faults of the German schools that they make no endeavour to build up character, and make no pretence of doing so. They

occupy themselves solely with the brains, and not at all with the whole individuality, of those entrusted to them, and consequently their influence is entirely negative. A German boy or girl takes after his home, not after his school. Fortunately the German home-life is such as to ward off the chief failings which an English home upbringing usually entails. English parents, perhaps accustomed to leaving the disagreeable severities to others, err on the side of weakness, and when from one cause or another their children are brought up entirely at home, the result is very often pampered weaklings. German parents, on the other hand, with the whole responsibility of their children's characters upon their shoulders, maintain a certain Spartan rigour and severity which atones for the lack of public school discipline, and the hardening, strengthening influence of public school life. The system is not without its advantages. The German claims, not without justification, that his home is not so quickly or easily broken up, that his children, living constantly at home in their most sensitive years, remain his children to the end of their lives. In England, he says, a girl is sent away from home and passes into another sphere of influence. When she comes back she cannot find her place in the old world, and either the family has to yield to her new views or there are all too frequent dissensions.

"You teach your children to be independent of you, and then afterwards want to tie them down to your way of living," a German once said to me. "What can you expect but trouble?"

The German boy and girl remain closely united

to the family until their tastes and opinions are formed on the family lines, and the advantage to the family unity in after-life is obvious.

On the whole the German method of education springs from the needs of the German character and mind, and its errors, therefore, are not so disastrous as they would be in other countries, and its virtues are undoubtedly more successful. It would be as great an absurdity to transplant German education on to English soil as it would be to transplant English ideas on to German. The English constitution would break down under the strain, and the English character would revolt against the inflexibility of the system, but, as the Germans have learnt from us, so it is surely possible for us to learn from them. The saying that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton has become dangerous; it may have been true of Waterloo—it will not be true of the future battles of the world. In the future more will be required of the soldier than mere physical prowess, daring, and courage; he will have to be mentally trained to master the most difficult problems of modern warfare, and if the German wins it will be because he has combined physical culture with a strenuous devotion to his mental advancement. He is physically and mentally prepared. And if the strain which he puts upon himself and the standard which he has set crushes many out of the race, it has this advantage, that only those win who are really worthy of their success.

The high store which is set upon education seems to penetrate down to the lowest classes in Germany. There are, of course, the free Volkschule—board

schools—and supplementary schools for those who wish to study after their compulsory school time is over, but these features are common to most civilised countries. The point that is peculiar in Germany is not the provision for the education of the masses, but the eagerness with which the provision is seized upon. I mentioned in my last chapter that a Society was giving a Bach concert for the benefit of the working man—that is to say, the working man had to pay 20 pf. for his reserved seat, whilst we, the ordinary folk, had to pay 50 pf. and take our chance. When I first heard of the idea I was not a little sceptical. I was told that the concert was arranged by a kind of workman's debating club, which usually occupied itself with all the questions of interest in art, politics, and social economy, under the guidance of various professors. I asked what class of workman was most represented. We were at the time walking in the Krieg Strasse, at six o'clock in the evening, when the factories outside the town discharge their workers, who stream through the west-end to their east-end homes. As a rule I avoid that time of the day. The crowd is quiet enough, but it is undoubtedly a crowd, and the results of the day's toil are very obvious. My friend indicated a group that was trudging toward us, dirty, weary, and dilapidated.

"Those are the sort of people you will see on Sunday evening," she said. My doubts thereupon increased, for the grimy, rough-looking folk did not at all strike me in the light of possible Bach admirers. I have myself only just reached the stage—after much education—when I can say with truth that I enjoy

listening to fugues and cantatas, and it seemed almost insulting to be told that these factory workers knew more about such things than I did. On Sunday, when I took my place at the back of the church, I felt inclined to say, "I told you so! Where are the factory workers now?" The reserved places were filled with a neatly dressed, freshly washed audience, evidently belonging to the small tradesmen class. To tell the truth, there was not a perceptible difference between them and the usual Sunday morning congregation, except that they did not cough so much.

"These are the factory people in their best," I was told, and indeed such proved to be the case, for out of the one thousand two hundred present, nine hundred were ordinary day labourers engaged either in the factories or on the railway.

The concert, with a preceding lecture on Bach's life and work, lasted over two hours, but there was not a sign of weariness or boredom. A better behaved audience could not have been wished, and I have no doubt lecturer and performers would be proud if they received the same courteous attention and interest from their usual more fashionable hearers. Now, as I know from experience, a lecture on Bach's music, with a following hour of the music itself, requires a certain mental ripeness, a certain amount of trained intelligence, to be appreciated, and I have since asked myself—or rather others—whether it is the training or the intelligence which has brought the German workman to such a high standard. As regards the training, I have already mentioned the ordinary Volkschule, which must be attended up to the four-

teenth year. The education provided is no doubt the usual State education, but the great virtue of the German system is its continuation. And the continuation is owed to the people themselves. It is the people who make use of the supplementary schools, of the instruction offered them during their two years with the colours. It is the people who form debating societies, who seek by every means in their power to continue with the foundations set up by the compulsory education of the State. The hunger after learning is felt everywhere and shows itself everywhere, and it must be said to the credit of those in power that everything is done to satisfy the demand. In this respect South Germany is the advance guard, with little Baden as its guide and example As I have mentioned before, the South German of every class is quicker and more intelligent than his Northern brother, and consequently, the need being there, far more is done for him. And certainly in no other State is so much done for the mental improvement of the lower classes as in Baden.

"If only *we* had such interesting lectures and concerts offered us!" is the whimsical complaint of the middle classes; but, as a matter of fact, the people are not spoilt, they are not the pampered children of a crazy philanthropy, which produces nothing but weaklings and beggars. As in other matters, so in his education, the German workman is self-supporting. However little he pays, he at least pays something towards his mental improvement. It is only a question of a few pfennige, which no doubt charity would be quite willing to pay for him, but wisdom has ordered, "Let him pay it himself!" And that he does

pay, and pays willingly, is proof that he is worthy of the efforts made on his behalf, and lifts the man higher in his own self-respect and in the esteem of the world.

A little while ago I asked, Why do foreigners still persist in settling in this expensive country? and I have now another and more definitive answer. They come for the education. Everything which has to do with education is to be had for a comparative trifle.

"Food, clothing, and lodging are preposterous," a Polish student once said to me; "but you can get the finest education in the world in any branch you like for next to nothing."

He was right; and since the average German cares very little about elegance and fine living, he takes what is offered him and is satisfied. The Conservatoriums, Art Schools, and Universities are crowded with people who look as though they could not afford the bare necessities of life, and probably such is really the case. Probably they cannot afford nourishing food or sufficient clothes, but they can afford education. Education is, in fact, the one thing which every German must have and every German can afford.

"If we were all soul and mind, what a lovely cheap place Germany would be!" as my English friend once pathetically observed.

CHAPTER XVII

THE POOR IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

MY English friend, who has settled in Germany for economy's sake, is very often puzzled by profound problems.

"How do the poor people manage to exist?" she demanded one day. "For instance, I cannot buy a good piece of meat under 1 mark 50 pf. the pound. How do they manage? Do they get double wages or what?"

"They certainly don't get double wages."

"Don't they eat meat, then?"

"They eat sausage."

"Not proper meat?"

"Sometimes—sometimes horse-flesh."

She looked at me with an expression on her face which said plainly—"Then the awful thing is really true!" and then asked—

"Where—where do they buy it?"

"At the shop. There are four horse-meat shops in Karlsruhe. Would you like me to buy you some?"

She repressed a shudder, and then, curiosity getting the better of disgust, she admitted that she would just like to see a piece. I thereupon plunged into the so-called slums and procured a pound of

the best horse-flesh for the sum of 15 pf. The shop was crowded with purchasers, and by no means of the poorest class, and everything was as clean and appetising as in any ordinary butcher's. I returned home with my purchase and displayed it in triumph. My English friend considered it at first with strong prejudice, and afterwards with a tendency to relent.

"It doesn't look so bad. Do they really like it?"

I told her that I believed so, that in fact it was in many cases far better meat than that which our own people eat, and suggested that she should try a piece. Her curiosity, however, had its limits, but it was evident that the horse-flesh bogey had lost something of its blood-curdling effectiveness as far as she was concerned. I had not exaggerated in saying that a piece of young horse-flesh is equal to the stuff sold to our poor as beef, and there is no secrecy made about its sale. The shops at which it can be procured describe themselves faithfully as "Pferdefleisch Händler," and the people who buy know perfectly well what they are doing. In Polizei Deutchland it would be impossible for a butcher to cheat his customers, and the talk about horse-meat sausages, etc., is pure nonsense. No doubt there are horse-meat sausages, but the people who buy them have no illusions on the matter. As a rule, however, the cheap sausage eaten by the people is composed of the waste pieces of veal, mutton, and beef of which the butcher can make no other use. All the slaughter-houses are under the strictest control, and the punishment for fraud in this respect is so heavy that it is worth nobody's

while to run the risk of passing bad or inferior meat on to the public under a false designation. On the whole the German—especially the South German—is not a very great meat eater. Even if he could afford to buy the best, I doubt if he would forsake his usual menu, which consists for the most part of potatoes, fish, sausage, and bread—not the so-called "black bread" of which we have heard so much. The South German, it must be observed, is better off and more luxurious than the North German. Consequently his food is more delicate, and the black bread of North Germany is not eaten in these parts. The ordinary workman eats either white bread or a mixture of rye and wheat, which makes not the slightest pretensions to being black. It is a light brown colour, nourishing, cheap, somewhat indigestible, but for a sturdy constitution quite enjoyable. The richest people have it on their tables, and it forms an excellent change when one is weary of the more delicate Brötchens. In North Germany "black bread" is eaten, but the British workman need waste no sympathy on his ill-used German cousin on that account. The German cousin is perfectly satisfied with his black bread, and would no doubt find wheat bread both flat and uninteresting. In fact the German, whether from north or south, is not very particular about his food. He eats because he is hungry, and as long as what he eats sustains and nourishes him, he does not care what the quality is. Nothing, for instance, could be more simple than the fare with which an ordinary German servant is satisfied. For breakfast a cup of coffee, a piece of bread without butter; for

dinner, soup, meat, and potatoes; for tea, again plain bread; for supper, a piece of sausage, a glass of beer, and more bread. Such is the daily menu. If they are given puddings, it is regarded as a luxury which they neither expect nor particularly appreciate. On this food they perform about double the work which an English domestic accomplishes, receive lower wages, and are cheerful and contented. A German servant is really a treasure, and that she is very difficult to transplant is a fact which English people who have experienced her honesty, industry, and modesty regret bitterly. Since in my "German Year" I wish to describe, as much as possible, only what I have actually seen, I cannot do better than take our own servants and their families as typical types of the lower classes. Their method of living, their wages, and their condition form a safe average from which one can judge the whole German people. Some are better off, some poorer, but the great mass follow the middle path, which I shall attempt to describe.

For something like ten years our servants have all been recruited from the same family. We started with the two eldest sisters, who, of course, got married, and we have at present the younger members, who, of course, are going to get married as soon as the necessary dot is there. The husbands of the elder sisters are workmen on the railway here, so that we have every opportunity to study their ways and means. I will, however, begin at the beginning, and finish up, as in the novels, with the married state. Our young cook, then, is what we in England would call a good plain cook. She

cannot perform any great culinary feats, but she is to be relied upon with all ordinary matters; and if ever there should happen to be a pinch too much or a pinch too little salt in the soup, she is so conscience-stricken and wretched that we hide the disaster from her by every means in our power. For her labours on our behalf she receives £18 a year. A first-class cook gets from £20 to £23, but our Freda makes no pretentions to being anything else but plain. Her sister, as housemaid, receives £15, and is the most hard-working person I have ever met. She keeps our ten rooms in perfect order, and no matter how many guests we may have she rises to the occasion with a cheery good-will which is quite refreshing. At such times, as an ease to our conscience, we insist on having a small boy to do the heavier work, but she looks upon him with unconcealed contempt, and on his assistance as a veiled insult. Their food I have already described. Their dress is simplicity itself. Both object strongly to black dresses and cap and apron, and will only assume these articles of elegance on great occasions. On Sundays both appear very neatly and quietly attired, and with the addition of the hat, which in everyday life is discarded. A German servant, no matter how superior, would not think of going to market with anything but a shawl over her head, and, as a rule, not even a shawl is used. Both girls are intelligent, with an average share of common-sense or "Mutter-witz," as they would call it, but neither have manifested any desire to play the piano, ride our bicycles, or read our latest novels. Their pleasures consist of a Sunday afternoon visit to their married relations,

a walk in the Stadtgarten with their friends, and a glass of beer whilst they listen to the band—this, however, as a luxury. Once a year we send them to the theatre, and once a year their Schatz takes them to the Kaiser Ball, and these are the red-letter events. It is little enough, and yet they are the cheeriest couple in the world, and in spite of their low wages they have saved quite a nice little sum—nearly the required £50. At Christmas, it is true, we give them money as presents, and this adds considerably to the nest-egg. Besides their wages, we also pay their share to the compulsory accident, illness, and old-age insurance. We are not obliged to do so, but if we did not it would simply mean that they would require more wages, so that it comes to the same in the end. Every working man and woman in Germany must be in these three insurances, and the payments are arranged in classes according to the wages received. Thus, whatever happens to our two girls, they are provided for. In the case of illness or accident they can claim the attendance of any doctor they choose, hospital nursing, and all the medicines ordered for them, free of charge. Should they be disabled for life, they receive a pension which is in any case granted them from their seventh year. Half of the payments to these insurances must be paid by the employer, the other half by the employee, but very often, like ourselves, the employer prefers to take the whole burden upon his shoulders. For our two servants we pay about 60 marks a year, which, if an additional tax, is more than balanced by the low wages and also by the satisfaction of knowing that we are free from all responsbility.

Should they marry and become independent, they can, if they wish, cease to belong to the insurances, and receive then the half of that which they have already paid in. The wise ones, however, prefer to continue the payments, and thus guarantee for themselves a certain security in all misfortune.

As to the way the poorer classes live, I cannot do better than describe the homes of our two old servants. *Bien entendu*, they are respectable, hard-working people of a certain position—that is to say, they count themselves something better than the day labourer or factory hand. The husband of the one is a shunter on the railway, and therefore, if you argue it out on German lines, a State official, and therefore a very superior person. His hours vary: every third night he is on duty from nine o'clock till six o'clock in the morning; on other days, from six in the morning till one o'clock; and for this he receives 4·50 per diem. As there are no children, the wife also goes out as a "help"—not a charwoman—for which she is paid 2·50, though she could, if she chose, get more at a large laundry. Laundry work, however, infers a step down in the social scale, and of course, like everybody else in Germany, she has too much "Standes Ehre" to lower herself for an extra 50 pf. Their joint income, therefore, is about 2660 marks, or £133, but of this only the husband's share—£82—is certain. For their bedroom, living-room, and kitchen they pay £16 a year, and added to this is their income tax of about £2, and a small sum for their insurances. They live comfortably, but, for English ideas, frugally. There is no extravagance or luxury in their life. Their little rooms on the third

floor in a decent part of the town, though kept in scrupulous cleanliness and order, and brightened with a few plants on the window-sill, contain nothing but the respectable necessities. In all this they are tpyical German people. Others may be worse or better paid, according to their trade and abilities, but in thrift, in abstemiousness, in a certain Spartan indifference to all forms of luxury and self-indulgence, they represent the great bulk of the lower classes. In their sphere of life, as everywhere, money is after all a small matter compared to the use made of it. Were the English workman twice as well paid as the German, it is doubtful if we would be as well off or so well provided for. He has learnt—or been taught—to depend on charity, and to expect more than his position in the social system warrants, and the consequence is a dislike for work, discontent, thriftlessness, or at any rate a financial state which provides nothing for a rainy to-morrow. The German is still, and for the benefit of his country it is to be hoped he will remain, a hard worker, who asks less than life offers him. The consequence is as inevitable. When the rainy day comes, when work fails, as it does often enough, there is always something to fall back upon. In Germany the misery which we have grown to regard as a necessary evil is remarkable for its absence. During last winter there were five hundred workmen out of employment in Karlsruhe—an unusually large number, I was told—but I did not in all my wanderings discover one case of absolute destitution. The unemployed were all men, neatly dressed, well fed and respectable-looking. I used to watch them standing about the Arbeitsbureau waiting for the

doors to open and their appearance seemed to indicate a calm patience in the face of a temporary "bad time." Certainly none of them looked starved, and certainly none of them had spent the night out of doors. It was noteworthy that not a single woman presented herself as being unable to obtain work. It may be said with justice that a Residenz like Karlsruhe is not a fair example, but in other towns I have made the same observations. Unemployed exist everywhere, but nowhere have I witnessed cases of real distress. The feature that must strike the foreigner when he wanders through the streets of a German city is that there are no loafers, no ragged children, no beggars. The slouching, hands-in-pocket, miserable objects which infest our towns, trying to pick up a livelihood with stray jobs, are rarities such as I have not met anywhere in this country. No doubt the State does a great deal for the people, but, be it said to their credit, they owe their comparative welfare chiefly to themselves. It is unusual for a workman to drink away his wages, still more unusual for the woman to do so, and the whole tendency is to save, to force the way upwards so that the children shall start life a step higher than the parents. As to the children, Karlsruhe at least seems to swarm with them, and I am not surprised to hear that Germany's population is increasing at the rate of a million a year. On the whole, they are an orderly crowd, clean and neatly dressed, with nothing of the ragamuffin about them either in appearance or manners. They do not, however, strike me as being particularly healthy. Whether it is the dry climate, or the work, or the food, I do not know, but a pair of rosy cheeks is the excep-

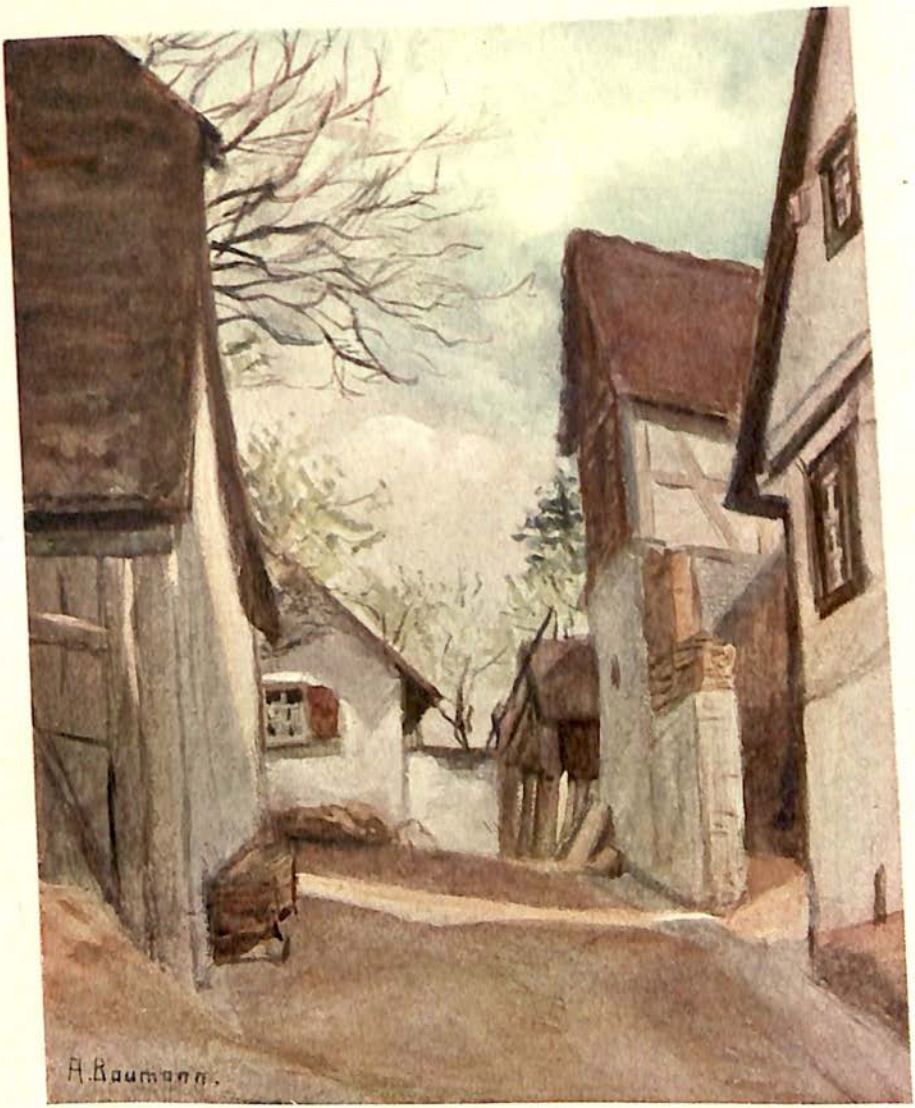
tion rather than the rule. I fancy the parents are chiefly to blame both for the pale faces and the bow legs which attract the strangers' notice. For German parents belonging to the lower classes, if very devoted, have decidedly old-fashioned and primitive ideas as regards the rearing of children, and are not easy to convert to modern ways. Fortunately, the results of their experiments seem to pass off later on in life, since the grown-up population presents, on the whole, a sturdy, healthy, and even handsome appearance. In remote parts of the country, as in the Black Forest, the case is more serious. The Black Forest peasant is more than old-fashioned—in his ideas on health and hygiene he dates back a couple of hundred years, and, conservative as he is, he refuses to be hurried on with the times. He shuts himself up in his picturesque house, closes the tiny windows, and whilst the thick snow builds itself round him, he lives in an atmosphere which would ruin all normal constitutions. I once made an observation on the closed windows to a friend, and her significant retort was that perhaps it was just as well for the Black Forest. Certainly, charming though they are, perched up in their loneliness on the mountain-side, these forest homes leave much to be desired as regards hygiene, and not even the magnificent pine air can counterbalance the effects of the peasant's mode of life. Naturally the children suffer the most. They are badly fed, not because their parents are poor, but because the children are expected to grow up without any particular care being taken of them. The Black Forester is even reproached with giving more attention to his pigs than to his offspring, and I have

not the least doubt that of the two the pigs get the best food. Thanks to this and other causes, there is a certain amount of Cretinism in the more secluded villages, and young populace impress me as either unhealthy or dull and stupid. There are exceptions, of course, and among the grown-up members one sometimes finds charming girls' faces and men whose bold, finely cut features might belong to aristocrats of the purest blood. In their way many of them are aristocrats and often very rich into the bargain. Their Hof or farm may have been in the family for generations, and since they never allow their children to marry into a poorer or lower class, their wealth and position increase steadily. They are intensely proud, reserved, gloomy, and tenacious, these Black Forest folk, but their obstinacy is mingled with a decided business ability, and the man who beats them in a bargain has good reason to flatter himself. On the other hand they are strictly honest, and behind their slowness and reserve kindly and hospitable. Their geographical position added to their natural exclusiveness has made them a race apart—altogether different in character and ideas to the people who inhabit the lowland villages, the most fascinating, picturesque villages in the world. This spring a few friends and I paid a visit to Berghausen, a little country "Nest" only a few miles from Karlsruhe, and spent the day there wandering about the streets, making sketches, taking photographs, talking to the people, and, generally speaking, causing a mild sensation among the simple folk, who inquired politely if they might have a photo, or at any rate a look into the sketch-books, whereupon, the latter boon being

granted, they expressed the profoundest admiration in true German fashion. That they usually held the picture upside down made not the slightest difference to them, though it successfully damped the artist's gratification. These people and their home have for me an inexhaustible attraction—in spite of the sometimes very noticeable countrified atmosphere. There are little by-streets and quaint corners in this old Berghausen, whose charm never diminishes. The world seems to have passed them by forgotten; the dust of ages lies on the old ricketty staircases; worm-eaten doors hang on their rusty hinges as though they had been thrown open by some inhabitant who had never returned; a sunny peace rests on the disorderly courtyard, where a cat basks on a bed of straw amidst a contented family of geese; overhead on the thatched roof I can see a stork's nest, and Frau Storch herself, just arrived from Egypt and very proud of the accommodation which the villagers—who love her—have prepared for her return. Suddenly the drowsy silence is broken by the sound of shuffling footsteps; a woman comes out on to the narrow stairway and nods and smiles at us.

"Tag! Ah, you have come to paint? Ja, Ja, das ist schön!"

Encouraged by her kindly face and manner, I ask her to show us over her home, and she takes us through the minute kitchen into the sitting-room, and thence into the bedroom—the two rooms which compose her home. Everything is spotlessly clean and neat. A motto—no German home is complete without a motto—hangs over the wooden bedsteads;



A CORNER IN BERGHAUSEN.

a few flower-pots stand on the tiny window-sill; immaculate white curtains frame the absurd little windows, which are thrown wide open to admit the fresh spring air. Our hostess is very proud of all she has to show us, and only regrets that her neighbours are not at home.

"Their rooms are much, much more beautiful," she says, with sincere, unenvying admiration. She then produces her three small children, who had been playing about in the street outside. There was a fourth, she told us, but he was at school.

"I am happier when he is at home," she said, "for then he looks after his little sisters."

That, indeed, seems the natural duty of all the boys, however young they may be. At every corner one sees a mite of seven or eight years old in charge of a small army of babies, over whom he watches with paternal solicitude. He and the babies form an altogether charming picture. They are just dirty enough to be amusingly human, and just clean enough to reveal the fact that they are washed every night and carefully looked after. Some of the small faces are strikingly pretty, with rosy complexions, flaxen hair arranged in ridiculous little plaits, and, like most of their race, fine, expressive eyes. Some of them are barefooted and otherwise scantily clad, but that is merely their summer attire, which they assume because it is an agreeable fashion, and not in the least because they are poor. The round, healthy cheeks and sturdy limbs witness to it that they are not starved; and the frankness with which our advances are received, the broad smiles and quick answers, proved that hitherto the world

had treated them very kindly. Some of the little girls display a calculated coquettishness, refuse to be photographed, are visibly delighted over our humble pleadings, at last yield with queenly condescension, and pose for us with a strong eye for effect.

Having photographed and properly admired our hostess' family, we give her our best thanks and go back to the principal street. It is not "the thing" to offer a peasant money on such an occasion. She would have refused it with scorn, and we should certainly have sunk in her estimation. She had invited us as friends, and so as friends we part. In the street a change has taken place. A Doodlesack Spieler (bagpipe player) has taken up his stand outside one of the Gasthaüser, and a little crowd has gathered round him to listen to his lugubrious melodies. The crowd reveals many types. There is the peasant himself, just returned from the fields, top-booted, roughly dressed, but with a bronzed, pleasant face. At his side stands his wife, looking considerably older, but cheery and laughing, with her arms akimbo, her eyes twinkling good-naturedly at the bevy of urchins who dance about or stand in awestruck interest. Others pass on their way without condescending to listen. Women bearing heavy faggots on their heads, old women, the grandmothers of the village one would suppose, pass with their iron rake over their shoulders, and look neither to the right nor to the left. They are all dressed alike, a short, loose-fitting jacket, short blue skirt and sabots forming the chief articles of their attire. We see some fine faces amongst them in spite of the thin colourless hair drawn straight back and pinned

FIELD WORKERS.

WOMEN FIELD WORKERS.

in an inartistic but neat coil at the nape of the neck. Weather-beaten, toil-worn, and wrinkled though they are, there is character in the boldly cut aquiline features and piercing grey eyes which smile at you from amidst the furrows. That is a point which strikes the stranger first—everybody smiles at you, everybody nods and wishes you good-day, and if you want to know anything they are all eagerness and goodwill. We have not been more than a few hours in the village before we are the best of friends all round. However, tea-time approaches, and we betake ourselves to the chief and most famous inn of the village—the Gasthaus zum Laub. It is a wonderful old place, with a courtyard surrounded by quaint oak galleries through whose trellises flowers have been trained to blossom. A tame stork, wandering in majestically from the garden, greets us with a loud beak-clapping which immediately calls forth mine host himself. Mine host is one of the aristocrats; he can trace his descent straight back two hundred years, during which time the inn has always been in the possession of his family. He is a fine old fellow, with white hair, bright eyes, an eagle nose, and manners in which there is a certain dignity, a certain consciousness of his position and birth. The inn is his pride, his heirloom. He shows us the low-built dining-room with the handsome carved oak pillars and wainscoting, the pictures presented to him by famous artists, and all his particular little treasures, very much as a grand seigneur might show you his château. We become quite awestruck, and feel as though it would be an insult to suggest paying for the meal of excellent

bread and honey and bad coffee which he spreads before us. He, too, seems to feel the painfulness of such a low business transaction, for he disappears when the bill is called for, and a servant performs the unpleasant task. Certainly we have had our money's worth, and one thing I can vouch for—namely, that the peasant fare, as set before us by our host, is substantial and nourishing. When one has devoured a piece of country bread one inch thick and five inches by seven, with an enormous piece of butter and any quantity of honey, one feels fit to face the next week or two without further sustenance. Thus strengthened we repair to the small station, and presently leave the village regretfully behind us. Its great charm is that it is a genuine village, as there are hundreds in South Germany; there are no squires or "Manor people" to fuss over the inhabitants, who live their lives in undisturbed peace. In North Germany the matter is different. There the great "Gutsbesitzer" plays the part of lord, and the villagers to all intents and purposes "belong" to him, but in this part of the world the great estate owners can be counted on one hand. For the most part the country is divided into minute pocket-handkerchief plots of land, without hedge or fence, which is the property of the peasant himself, and over which he disposes in complete independence. The cultivation of his plot is his great work in life, and his whole family assists him, the women taking their full share of the burden. For the foreigner it is at first a curious and almost painful sight to see these women toiling in the fields beneath the blaze of the summer sun, their white head-dress drawn over

A TYPICAL VILLAGE SCENE.

their bronzed, furrowed faces, their shoulders hunched through the long, continuous stooping. It is no wonder that there are so few young women to be found in a German village. The charming barefooted little girls who play about in the chief street vanish from their fourteenth year. One season's toil is enough to rub off the first bloom of youth, and at twenty they are usually married and have children of their own to add to their burden. Gaunt, figureless, roughly clad, with sunken eyes and sharp features, the colourless hair scraped straight back from the deeply lined foreheads, they might be anything between thirty and forty years of age, and seem to exist solely to labour, without any pleasure or recompense save the daily bread. To all intents and purposes the woman plays the same part as her husband, save that child-bearing is added to her other burdens. She works as hard as he does, and during the years when her brothers are serving, the chief responsibility rests on her shoulders. That she ages before her time is inevitable. A German village seems full of old women, but they are not really old—they are sometimes quite young, but with their youth crushed out of them by the stress of their existence. It must not be supposed that the man does not take his share, or that the women are nothing but beasts of burden. The former does not, and cannot, spare himself; it is not his fault that in the hard struggle he has to make use of every assistance in his power, and the woman, on her side, being a true German, stands by him loyally and willingly. There are indeed fine men and fine women in these old villages, and their cheery

endurance, their good-humour, intelligence, and courage, is a revelation of the power of the human character to rise to the level of the task imposed upon it.

So much for the dark side of the picture. There is a bright side—perhaps much brighter than the stranger would think after a casual stroll through a German village. He must not be misled by the tumble-down houses and barefooted children. It is very often not poverty but indifference to comfort which makes the peasant live as he does. He asks very little of life. Enough to eat, a clean room to live in, a wife and children, and his ideal existence is already attained. As a rule these peasant families are very happy and peaceful. The man is a steady worker and a good father, the woman his cheery, industrious comrade. There is nothing cringeing or browbeaten about either of them—rather their manner is frank, sincere, not untouched with a certain pride, perhaps the pride of honest labour honestly accomplished. Their work is their life, and in the peaceful fulfilment of the duty nearest to hand they find their reward and their happiness. May the jerry-builder of "reform cottages" and all social reformers in general leave them their peace!

Since I have just dealt with matters rural, it would be perhaps fitting to add a few words on ordinary country life in Germany, which, as far as South Germany is concerned, is a paradox, since country life, at any rate in our meaning of the term, is non-existent. In North Germany the great land-owners live on their estates, and the social intercourse between them resembles our own, but here no one

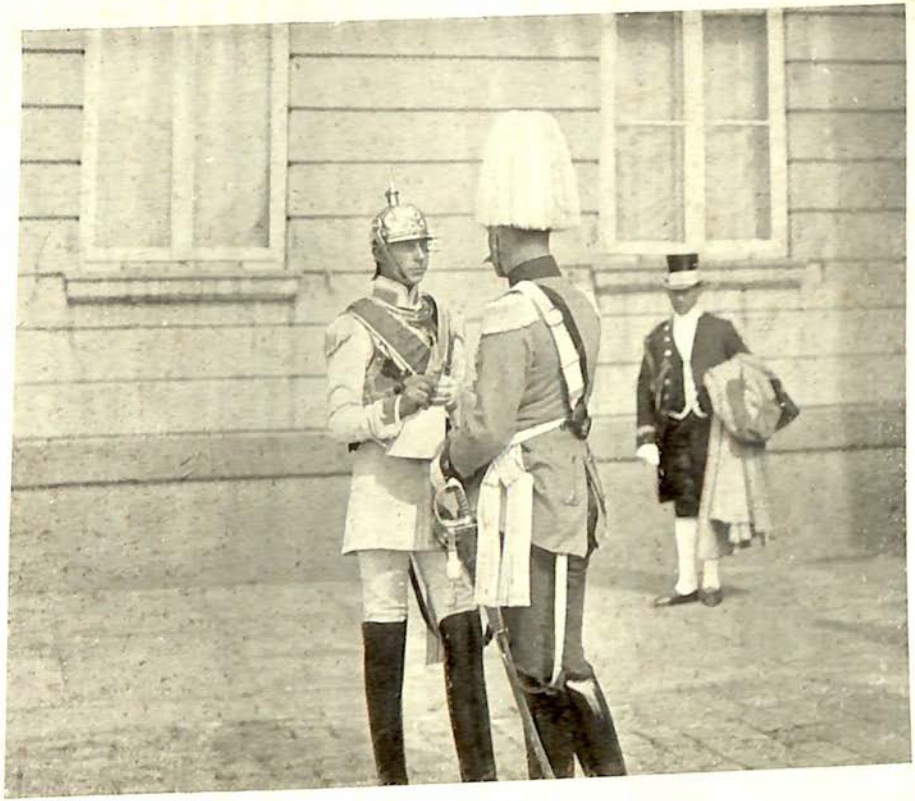
lives in the country who can possibly afford to live elsewhère. Beautiful country houses are practically unknown, or only used for short periods in the year by the very wealthy; and anybody wishing to live out of town would have to reconcile himself to complete isolation from his own class. There is no hunting; shooting is the sport of the few; in a word, all the attractions which bring English house parties together, and make country life enjoyable, play no part in this part of the world. Here the country belongs to the peasant, and in describing him I have described the one typical and predominating element in South German rural life.

CHAPTER XVIII

NATIONAL SPIRIT

IN Karlsruhe I see so many royalties—Imperial and minor—that I feel quite as though I were in the Court Circle. Perhaps I have been particularly privileged in this respect, for in the time that I have been here the late Grand-Duke's jubilee, his lamented death, the Kaiser Manœuvres this year, and other similar important events have gathered together many crowned heads in the simple Karlsruhe palace, and as Karlsruhe proper concentrates itself into quite a small circumference, it was scarcely possible to go outside the house without—figuratively—running up against the Emperor or the Crown Prince or the Grand-Duke or some other potentate, so much so that I am now an adept at Hof Knixe, though they still cover my English soul with embarrassment.

Familiarity breeds contempt. I do not think in this case that there is any question of contempt, but it is undoubtably true that in Germany royalties do not cause the same sensation as in England. One sees too many and too much of them. Here, for instance, one meets the Grand-Duke—the whole Ducal family, in fact—walking along the streets, in the forest, shopping, riding, driving, in the theatre,

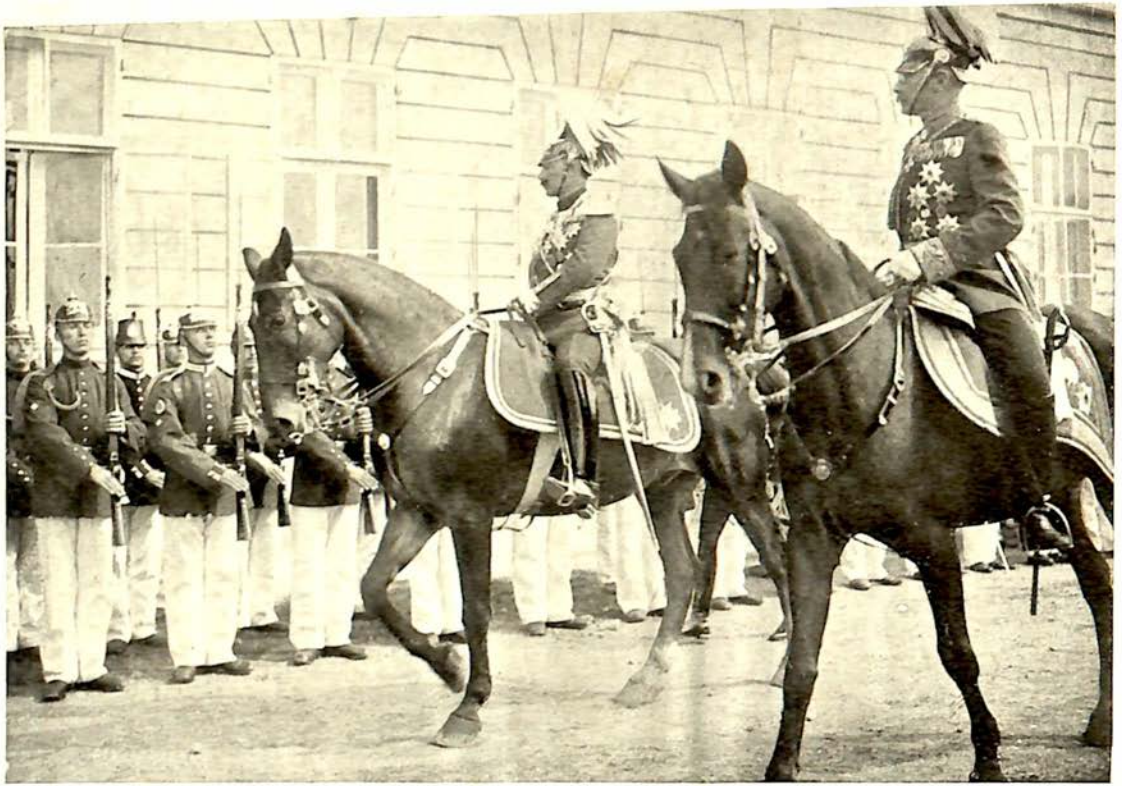


THE CROWN PRINCE AND PRINCE MAXIMILIAN OF BADEN.

KAISER MANŒUVRES.

everywhere and at all times, so that an explosion of enthusiasm on every appearance would be embarrassing and exhausting. It is bad enough as it is, and I should think the constant acknowledgment of the bows and hat-lifting with which the Grand-Duke is greeted must considerably mar the pleasure of a walk through his capital. The same applies to other royalties. The Emperor comes at least twice a year on a visit; the Queen of Sweden spends a great part of her time at her native Court, and there is a constant *va-et-vient* of such great people, so that no one gets worked up to any pitch of excitement or interest when they make their appearance. The first time I went to witness the Emperor's arrival I was filled with eagerness, and was not a little disgusted at the reception accorded to him. A thin crowd, a general hat-lifting, a few cheers—that was all, and I came home with the impression that the Germans were either the most unpatriotic people I had ever met, or the Emperor the most unpopular monarch. After having witnessed the fourteenth arrival, however, I feel that neither supposition was correct. In the first place, my own eagerness has died a natural death. I have had the pleasure of sitting so many times *vis-à-vis* to his Imperial Majesty through the long Wagner operas, that I feel there is nothing to be gained by going to the station to witness his arrival. No doubt that is the wrong standpoint. I shall be told that the people should go to welcome, not to stare—which is very nice in theory, but unfortunately, like so many theories, finds but little popularity in the practice. The reason that a crowd gathers together when

a great personage is expected is that they want to see the show and make a noise, and if the Emperor needs any consolation he may be sure that those who *do* witness his arrival are there simply and solely to welcome him. The usual noisy sightseers are not present—that is the only loss. Moreover, the German temperament must be taken into consideration before passing judgment. The German is an enthusiast, but an enthusiast of a very stolid type. There is not a grain of jingoism in his make-up, and when he does break through the wall of seeming indifference, he does it in an orderly sort of way, and only on really great occasions. Hence the foreigner can be surprised in two ways—as I was. He can be surprised at the everyday coldness of the people as regards national matters, and at the passionate, profound feeling which answers to a great call. I had, for instance, no idea of the love and reverence in which the late Grand-Duke was held until his jubilee and his death. The one occasion was a revelation of an enthusiastic devotion which few rulers dare lay claim to, the other revealed a whole people plunged into mourning. It is the same in all the other branches of national feeling, and to this placidity of temperament must be added other ingredients which go to make up the German's own peculiar patriotism. Germany is the German's Fatherland, but the German is something else besides a German. He is a Badener, a Bavarian, a Saxon, a Prussian, and his own particular little Fatherland, his own particular sovereign, are, in everyday life, nearer and dearer to him than the whole great unity and its Imperial ruler. Here,



THE EMPEROR AND THE GRAND-DUKE OF BADEN.

KAISER MANŒUVRES.

and I suppose it is the same in every State, the Grand-Duke has the first place in the people's hearts, the Emperor the second. It is only natural that it should be so, and in many ways it has its great advantages. The Emperor is a splendid, far-off figure, ruling the destinies of the Empire; the Grand-Duke is the direct father of his people; he goes amongst them, lives amongst them, is present at all their festivities, shares in all their joys and sorrows, assists financially and by his presence in every social movement. There is no one, however small or insignificant, who is not, as it were, in touch with the ruling house, who is not within reach of the Grand-Duke's help and sympathy. I remember an amusing little incident which illustrates this close relationship. At the late Grand-Duke's jubilee a number of peasants from the Black Forest, gay in their picturesque "Tracht," were being marshalled past the Imperial visitors. The Empress observed amongst them a young fellow with a large bouquet of wild flowers, who hesitated before her, evidently covered with embarrassment. Believing that the flowers were intended for her, and wishing to help him out of his difficulty, she smilingly stretched out her hand. The boy shook his head with great determination, and pointed at the Grand-Duke.

"Dem dô!" ("For him there!") he said, and pushing past the Empress thrust his gift into his own ruler's hand. He did not mean any rudeness—it seemed only natural to him that *his* Grand-Duke should have the first and the best. It was only a little thing, but it typified the attitude of the

people as a whole. The Imperial family is held in awe and respect, but the Grand-Duke is their very own.

One hears a great deal about Socialism in Germany—or at least one reads a great deal about it—and from the number of seats which that party has won in the Reichstag, and from the meetings which are held, one would suppose that it was a very mighty party indeed. So it is—but not to the extent which the Socialists flatter themselves. There are two things which make the Socialist party appear stronger than it really is. The first is that the middle-class German, the patriotic and Imperial German, takes no interest in politics, and is very difficult to rouse to action. Thus, whilst the Socialists vote to the last man, the Liberals and Conservatives, out of which the best part of the nation is composed, sit at home, smoke and drink their beer, and forget that such things as elections ever existed. The second point is that the German of all classes is not at heart a Socialist; at heart he is loyal and Imperial, and when he votes with the Socialist it is because he is a German, consequently very disgusted with everything, and determined on showing his disapproval in the most effective way possible. The Emperor, naturally, has his share of the grumblings of his subjects, and very strained relationships have often been the consequence. The fatal "disclosures" of a few months ago is a case in point. Strong was the disapproval, and bitter the reproaches, but at the bottom I do not believe that the Emperor has lost a whit of his popularity. On the contrary, judging from the reception accorded to him here

shortly afterwards, the people were secretly rather proud that their Emperor has a temperament which occasionally runs away with him. It is after all somewhat exceptional to have a temperament nowadays. At any rate I advise no one to agree with the German when he grumbles at his ruler. It is the German's privilege to grumble, just as it is the privilege in an ordinary family for the members to say unpleasant things about each other, but woe to the outsider who dares to interfere! Moreover, William II. is an Emperor in more than name; outwardly and in his life he represents his position, his very love of magnificence throwing a glamour, a medieval splendour about him which appeals to the German character and taste. And the nation recognises him as a man of high principles and high ideals, with his country's greatness well at heart, and those virtues have held him bound to his people in the worst and stormiest periods of their relations towards each other. Whatever else he is the Emperor is German; German in his ideas, in his virtues, and in his failings. His people recognise themselves in him, they see in him the epitome of their race, and if they disagree with him—as is the way with those who resemble each other too closely—a real and prolonged estrangement is impossible. As to the Press, its "revelations," "disclosures," "interviews," and scandals, one can only feel an intense pity for a man who, thanks to his exalted position, is laid open to the calumnies of bad enemies and the betrayal of worse friends without the possibility of redress. *Lèse Majesté* indeed! The expression seems to me wholly ironical. The Emperor, as far as I can see,

is the only man in this country who can be abused, betrayed, and libelled with impunity.

This is not a political chapter; politics do not play any greater part in my German Year than they play in the year of the average German, and I will therefore desist from a long discourse on the subject. The German himself has very little interest in the matter. A short time ago the elections took place in Karlsruhe without causing the slightest disturbance or excitement. The papers and those actually engaged in the struggle worked themselves up to the correct fever pitch with appeals, threats, denunciations, and so on, but the people remained entirely passive. It is this indifference which must be remembered when calculating the powers of the various parties or when seeking to find out the real feeling of the nation. Newspaper opinions are practically valueless. The newspaper is not the voice of the people—it is the voice of the party, and the foreigner who listens with over great seriousness to the rantings and bickerings of the Press, under the impression that it is Germany who is speaking, is liable to be very much misled. The average German takes very little heed of the opinions of his daily paper. He skips through the latest news paragraph, ignores the political column, and considers he has done his duty. The Englishman with his half-dozen terrific periodicals fills him with amazement, and what still more astonishes him is the importance which the Anglo-Saxon attaches to Press opinions and prophecies. The German holds them to be of no value whatever; they are not his opinions, but the opinions of a party which is itself not representative—far less

so than in England where the people are steeped in politics down to the lowest workman. The Socialist party, for instance, is composed of a comparative handful of red-hot demagogues supported by a mass of ignorance, stupidity, discontent, and indifference. When some over-zealous Junker in the Reichstag makes some autocratic remark which displeases him, the labourer throws in his vote for the Socialist without further thought over the matter. The Socialist receives him with open arms as a convert, and the labourer remains what he was—a respectable citizen who will probably be the first to cheer the Emperor when he sees him. From what I have heard and seen, I believe any great appeal to the nation, as in the case of war, would burst the great Socialist party like a bubble.

There is, however, one dark spot in the national character which is not to be denied and difficult to excuse. This is the almost servile admiration which a certain type of German has for foreign ways and foreign customs, his ready adoption of their fashions and, what is worse and all too frequent, his adoption of their nationality. As far as I know, the German is the only man who will not only deliberately and willingly deny the land of his birth and take on new colours, but will look back upon his origin as a sort of stigma. Even in my small circle I know three or four families without a drop of English blood in their veins who have become naturalised British subjects, and are deeply offended if you do not pronounce their German name in the English way. What is more they will not hesitate to abuse their blood-countrymen, make

fun of their customs, and exalt their newly-acquired nationality in a manner peculiarly objectionable. They are the parvenus of the nation, people who, having forced their way into a circle to which they do not belong, attempt to hide their origin by throwing as much mud over it as they can. The Prussian rarely if ever sins in this respect; he is a true patriot, passionately German, and it is to him therefore that Germany owes her greatness. The South German is the worst sinner; and though it is only one class which produces these parasites —chiefly the merchant and bourgeois class—it is quite large enough to make the matter serious. It is as though in this particular circle the national feeling had never fully developed, but remained a stunted growth which is easily uprooted and replaced by another plant—usually carefully cultivated with gold and self-interest. I have said elsewhere that the aristocracy and a certain superior division of the bourgeoisie formed the backbone of the nation, and their patriotism is another proof. The aristocrat is German to the core; he is not only proud of his old name, but of his birth, his home, his country, and his Emperor. He is ready to sacrifice everything for these, his highest ideals. Whatever else may be said of him, he is at least no turncoat. Old-fashioned, conservative, and autocratic he may be, but if patriotism is old-fashioned and conservative then is the nation to be pitied who stands in the advance-guard of progress!

I remember, during a tour through the Black Forest some time ago, sitting at the dinner table of an hotel with two Germans who had entered into

a hot discussion over their own and other countries. I knew neither by name, but, as is usual in Germany, we were on bowing terms, and both knew that I was English. Perhaps as a bad compliment the one began to abuse Germany and to exalt England above every other nation. I certainly felt far from flattered. The fact that an educated man could speak as he did of his own country before a foreigner seemed to leave an unpleasant taste in the mouth. The other German was furious, and at last rose and left the table with the remark—

"Whatever grievances you may have you have no right to speak as you have done. Whatever her faults Germany is your country and should be for you the only country in the world."

The rest of the meal was decidedly uncomfortable, and afterwards I asked my German friend, who during the discussion had been simmering with indignation, if she knew who the two men were. We found out from the visitors' book, and it was significant that the patriot was a Prussian count, the other a merchant from some South German commercial city. Naturally I do not base my conclusions on this one instance, nor do I infer that all the merchant class is composed of such types. All I can assert is that the parasites—they are little better—who settle in other countries, taking all the benefits they can get and denying their fatherland, are recruited chiefly from the ranks of the money-makers. Even there, however, this disease or weakness in national pride is gradually disappearing. It was no doubt the result of the long years when patriotism was cramped and discouraged

by the fatal disunity; and now that Germany as a united nation has taken her place in the foremost rank, her children are throwing off the old vice and beginning to display the high pride of race without which no people can be truly great. And to-day let no one be misled by the grumblings and seeming indifference of a certain class. A ready overflow of patriotic feeling on every small occasion is usually tainted with hysteria, and the German is not hysterical. His enthusiasm and his patriotism lies deep below the surface, and only when the storm winds of danger or adversity arise will the world know the forces which are hidden beneath the calm. With the call to arms divisions and hatreds will be forgotten, and the Emperor will find himself at the head of a mighty united nation, ready to make every sacrifice and—above all—prepared.

CHAPTER XIX

WHICH CONTAINS AN APPEAL AND AN APOLOGY

IN the six years which I have spent almost uninterruptedly in Germany and amongst the German people, I have not once had to defend my nationality, or heard a word which could wound my national pride. Those who have lived a great deal abroad will understand that that is a big statement, and it is all the bigger because in those six years the tension between the two countries has been acute and the war clouds have hung heavy on the horizon. On the one hand I read of nothing but hatred, jealousy, and rivalry; on the other I experienced nothing but kindness, courtesy, and goodwill. I do not think my experience is exceptional. English people with open minds who live in this country have only affection to express for their German hosts, and they in turn are invariably popular and welcomed in every circle of German society. The old dislike for the Englishman has long since been swept away, and as individuals the two races agree admirably. Why not then as nations? There is the difficulty, the problem which perhaps only time will solve. As I have said before, not a little of the trouble is due to the newspapers and to those dangerous

people who have never been out of England but know all about it, but even putting those two irresponsible sources of irritation aside, there remains an undeniable bitterness. That the bitterness is very one-sided is as obvious as it is inevitable. Age is afraid and jealous of youth—not youth of age. We have grown and can grow no more and can only fight against decay; the German nation is growing, and we watch her progress with an alarm which in private life shows itself in obstinate prejudice, in public life in feverish activity and restless outbursts of irritability. The German attitude towards England during these periods is one of surprise and mild amusement. In various ways the question which the German asks is, "Why do you worry so? Are you grown so weak that you cannot watch the progress of another nation without panic? We do not want war with you. We want to develop, we must develop, we have the right to develop. Leave us in peace, and we will leave you in peace."

It is the cry of youth and national vitality seeking an outlet, and that it rings unpleasantly on our older ears is almost inevitable. We do not and dare not trust to the proffered peace. Unconsciously or consciously we look forward to the time when youth shall have become full-grown, and old age decrepitude, and ask if it would not be better to strike now, whilst we have the strength. That is also what the German asks. He wonders why we have not struck long ago, since, at the bottom, he believes that it is now too late, that in a war between two countries his nation would come out victorious.

But even if he were mistaken, even if there were still time, an attack delivered out of sheer fear of the future would be, in the end, as disastrous as it would be unEnglish. We condemn all attempts to cripple a rival in sport, firstly because it is unfair; secondly, because we know that such an attempt is rarely successful. We know that the fittest wins, and as good sportsmen we prefer to stand aside, cheering the winner even though he do not carry our colours. In the greater struggle between the nations the same principle holds good. The fittest wins. Therefore it is above all things necessary that we should steel ourselves in national virtues, in energy, in self-sacrifice, in unsparing endeavour, believing that if we are worthy, if we have retained our old high standard, we shall also retain our place in the world. Wealth, Dreadnoughts, spasmodic bursts of activity, defensive alliances, and so on, will not save us from the future—our own fitness is our one salvation, and our fitness lies in our national character, not in our national pocket. At the bottom it is not the Germans we are afraid of but of ourselves, and when we have once recovered our self-confidence, our justified belief in our own strength and virtue, we shall be able to greet the growing nation as an ally and a friend. The only question is whether that justified belief and self-confidence is still possible.

Perhaps this short digression into national matters may appear to have very little to do with my German Year, but, indeed, the relations between the two countries play a great part in my German life. It is not possible to love and respect a foreign people and not feel the keenest regret when shadows

of misunderstanding arise between them and my own countrymen. It is not possible to receive hospitality and kindness from them, to live in peace and mutual understanding in their midst, and not wish that the same feelings of friendship and goodwill might exist between the nations as well as between the individuals. I firmly believe that the German people—I am not speaking of the politicians and newspapers, but of the people whose casting vote will weigh more than all else together—wish for peace, and are ready, even eager, to hold out the hand of friendship. Two nations who, time after time, have fought shoulder to shoulder, who together saved Europe from her greatest danger, related in blood and in all the highest virtues of courage, tenacity, and loyalty, should surely go forward in the future united as in the past. It is the only logical, the only natural and just solution of the problem which confronts us, and it is a union worthy of every effort and of every sacrifice. On its consummation depends the world's future, humanity's progress. England against Germany! We dare not imagine the end of such a disaster, and woe to that nation which first draws the sword — but England and Germany together! It may be a dream, a Utopia beyond earthly power of realisation, but it is a dream worth dreaming, and no man, no nation is the worse for struggling towards an ideal however high, however unattainable. And we have no right to cry "impossible!"—not yet. There is still time and hope. Only let true greatness of purpose, true generosity, open-mindedness, and faith replace the canker-worms of fear, envy, hatred,

and distrust, and the ideal will be within reach and the world's danger passed for ever.

So much for my humble appeal. The politician will no doubt smile condescendingly and produce statistics, extracts from papers, speeches, and secret treaties enough to overwhelm an ignorant private individual. But I refuse to be overwhelmed. My German years have given me hope, and I prefer to go on hoping to the end.

This German Year, at any rate, is finished, the wander through my impressions and experiences closed. I lay no claim to infallibility; there are exceptions to every rule, and it may be that in certain points I am wholly mistaken. But I have described faithfully what I have seen and heard, and by that witness alone have I formed my opinions and passed my judgment. I am fully conscious that I have said nothing new, nothing which all Germans and many English people living in this country do not already know, and for this I apologise. But if I have lifted a corner of the veil which divides the great bulk of my countrymen from my German friends, if I have brought the two peoples a step nearer, then my task has not been undertaken wholly in vain.

THE END.

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